Constructing the "Brother": Freemasonry, Empire, and Nationalism in India, 1840-1925

by

Vahid Jalil Fozdar

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Committee in charge:

Professor Thomas R. Metcalf, Chair
Professor Eugene F. Irschick
Professor Robert P. Goldman

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores the role of Freemasonry in the development of modern India, by bolstering the British Empire in India, and by informing the Indian nationalist movement.

Freemasonry was an ideal imperial "cult": it did not require that one apostatize one's religion, yet it was a quasi-religion with its own rituals and doctrines to which followers of diverse faiths, it was thought, could subscribe. This Masonic "religion" was a vehicle for both Enlightenment and Romantic thought. Also, Masonic antiquarian scholars sought to identify elements of Masonry in every religion, in order to establish an ancient basis of brotherhood. Various British colonial officials sought to employ this in fostering imperial unity and in engendering loyalty to the British royal family, which itself had close ties to Freemasonry.

Freemasonry, however, could also serve the needs of Indian nationalists. The Indian national movement began as a demand by western-educated Indians to be given more responsibility in running the affairs of India. Many prominent early nationalists were Freemasons. Freemasonry contributed to Indian nationalism in four main ways. First, by serving with, and being increasingly accepted by, British Freemasons in the administrative work of the lodge, Indians found it difficult not to think that they should be

accorded similar responsibilities by their European "brothers" (many of them government officials) in the management of the British Raj. Second, Indian Freemasons were often leaders in socio-religious reform movements in their respective communities, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Parsi, and the reformed religions they sought to construct looked much like Freemasonry—void of "superstition," in conformity with science, and without "irrational" barriers, such as caste. Third, by bringing Indians of various communities together as "brothers," Freemasonry allowed Indian Masons to imagine a pluralistic, secular Indian nation in which all could be equal citizens, much as they were in the lodge. Finally, the structure of Freemasonry, based as it is on constitutionalism and written laws, enabled many Indians to participate, within the lodge, in an environment characteristic of a liberal democracy even before they could do so in the larger society.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MLRS	Membership List for Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 342, S. C., Bombay
MRWI	*Masonic Record of Western India*
MRA	Membership Registry for Lodge *Aryan*, No. 1709, E. C., Bombay
MRB	Membership Registry for Lodge *Barton*, No. 475, S.C., Lonavla
MRES	Membership Registry of Lodge *Eastern Star*, No. 1189, E.C., Bombay
MRIB	Membership Registry for Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Bombay
MRSLJ	Membership Registry for Lodge *Sir Lawrence Jenkins*, No. 3275, E. C., Bombay

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> This society is founded on and professes the practice of social and moral virtue; truth, charity in its most extended sense, brotherly love, and mutual assistance being inculcated in it. It possesses an elaborate ritual, numerous grades of officers, and many secret signs and passwords, by which members may make themselves known to other members of the craft in any part of the world. Secret organizations of free or enfranchised operative masons, with similar ritual, were formed in the middle ages, when skilled workmen moved from place to place to assist in building the magnificent sacred structures—cathedrals, abbeys, etc.—which had their origin in those times, and it was essential for them to have some signs by which, on coming to a strange place, they could be recognized as real craftsmen and not imposters. There was such a society of actual masons and builders in England in the seventeenth century, and some persons not belonging to the craft had been accepted as members of it; hence the full name of the present fraternity, "Free and Accepted Masons" (abbreviated *F. and A. M.*). Modern freemasonry dates from the organization in 1717 of the four lodges then existing in London, on a new basis, into a grand lodge, by which other grand lodges were chartered. To mark its departure from the limited scope of the original society, the principles and methods of the order are called *speculative masonry*, the terms and insignia of operative masonry being retained. Fable, though absolutely without any historical basis, takes the history of the order back to the Roman empire, to the Pharaohs, to the building of Solomon's temple or the tower of Babel, or even to the building of Noah's ark.
>
> Some, deep *Freemasons*, join the silent race,
> Worthy to fill Pythagoras' place.
> *Pope*, Dunciad, iv. 571.[1]

I. "MEETING ON THE LEVEL"

On the night of October 20, 1868, a remarkable event occurred in a largely Parsi and Muslim Masonic lodge of Bombay which disturbs the conventional view of race relations in late 19th-century India. That night, Lodge *Rising Star* received a number of visitors, both European and Parsi, including the Acting Provincial Grand Master, Henry Morland. After the business was done,

> [u]pwards of 80 brethren sat down to a sumptuous banquet which was prepared and most tastefully laid out by Bro. Steward. After the removal of the cloth the usual toasts were proposed and responded to. Some very able and excellent speeches were heard and the evening was greatly enlivened by the songs of

---

[1] *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia* (New York: The Century Co., 1899), vol. 3, 2369.

> several European and Parsee Brethren. The brethren separated at about 12 o'clock apparently well satisfied with the few hours they had spent together.[2]

The image of Indians and Europeans eating and singing together late into the night suggests an easy familiarity between the races which greatly complicates the prevailing view of race relations in the Raj during the latter half of the 19th century.

Nor were such events uncommon in the Masonic world of Bombay in the late 19th century. For example, on March 21, 1893, in commemoration of the Parsi "Jamshedi Navroz," or new year, a festival was held under the auspices of Lodges *Rising Star*, *Rising Sun*, *Eastern Star*, *Cyrus*, *Islam*, and *Aryan* at the Masonic Hall.[3] These were all the "Native" lodges in Bombay City at the time. The event included prayers, hymns, and poetry, but also

> an entertainment which comprised a farce entitled "A Sudden Arrival" and a comedietta "Marriage by Telephone." With the object of making the festival as attractive and popular as possible *the Committee had invited ladies to the banquet and entertainment and a very large number of them, both European and Native, had responded to the invitations*, thus lending additional eclât to the entertainment by their presence.[4]

Given the sexual-racial tensions excited by the Ilbert Bill controversy only ten years earlier (over the proposal to have Indian judges presiding over cases which might involve white women—as Kipling presented the crux of the issue[5]), this mixing of Masons and their wives, both Indian and Briton, across racial and gender lines, seems astounding to us now. It must have been no less astounding to those Masons in 1893. Freemasonry thus proves itself a compelling subject for the social historian of the British Raj. However, Freemasonry was not only involved in the relations between colonizer and colonized, but also in modern Indian nationalism; in the new sciences, re-formulations of religious

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[2] Minutes of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 342 (S.C.), for Oct. 20, 1868, in *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*) vol. 5, no. 8 (Nov. 1868): 312.

[3] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342, S.C.* (Bombay: British India Press, 1912), 265.

[4] Ibid., 265.

[5] See Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself, For My Friends Known and Unknown* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1937), 55-56. See also Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 211-12.

thought, religious reform, and the attempt to re-make society; in recovering the ancient past for political and social ends; in the imperial venture; and in bourgeois capitalism. Thus, Freemasonry compels the attention of the political, economic, and intellectual historian of modern India, as well. Indeed, Freemasonry, the world's largest international fraternal order, touches upon so many aspects of modern society that it may be treated as an analytical tool with which to grid modern world history.

My work forms a part of a renewed interest among historians in Freemasonry in recent years. This thesis seeks to explore Freemasonry's connection with British imperialism in India and its role in the emergence of early modern Indian nationalism. For a variety of reasons, and to keep this project within manageable parameters, I have had to concentrate on the Bombay Presidency, but where possible I have ventured much farther afield—to Bengal, Madras, Punjab, various princely states, and even beyond India, to Burma, Afghanistan, and Iran.

Freemasonry is a complex phenomenon and cannot be easily decoded. Each of the parts of Freemasonry had parallels in the outside world, but dividing up Freemasonry into discreet parts does not explain the whole. Freemasonry brings them together in an incredibly broad way, and it was used by a wide diversity of people. Ritual bonding and orthopraxy gave one lots of elbow room when it came to orthodoxy. Such diversity led to, or allowed for, internal tensions and contradictions. For example, Freemasonry spoke of universal brotherhood, but not all lodges in India were racially mixed. The notion of brotherhood contributed to imperialism—for both Britons and Indians—and also fostered nationalism among Indians.

Indeed, at the root of Freemasonry is the notion of universal ritual brotherhood. When introduced to India by the British colonial rulers it naturally created a tension between the universalist Enlightenment ideals of equality and merit (for which Freemasonry was an important vehicle) and the privileged status which the British accorded themselves in India. Freemasonry challenged the British "creation of

difference," wherein Indians were seen as essentially different from Britons, and it forced the British to deal with the fundamental principles of their most cherished fraternal order when Indians sought admission into the order. Perhaps more than any other organization, Freemasonry brought Britons and Indians into intimate contact and challenged the British in terms of their own values. At the same time, Freemasonry in India had to deal with British racism—even within the ranks of Freemasonry, expecially in the mid-19th century and later, when Indians began to become Masons and thus "brothers" to the British, thereby challenging British Masons to "re-imagine" the imperial state at a time when similarity with Indians was giving way to the notion of essential and hence permanent "difference." This was the crux of relations between the races in the Indian Empire. By studying Freemasonry in India, then, we get to know the British colonizers much better and in a more nuanced way.

At the same time, membership in Freemasonry contributed to the upward social mobility of Indians, and so this thesis also explores the role of Freemasonry in the development of modern India, not only in bolstering the British Empire in India, but in supporting the early phase of the Indian nationalist movement. I argue that, in addition to Christian evangelism and such popular Western philosophies as Utilitarianism, Freemasonry constituted a third vehicle for transmitting Western thought to India. In many ways, a Macauley, an Alexander Duff, a Montesquieu, and the Masons were speaking the same language and operating within the same discourse. Freemasonry, though, was more adaptable to the Indian condition than Christianity (evangelical, or otherwise), for it didn't require an Indian to give up his religion. Instead, it reflected a flexibility which permitted a strong attachment to Christ, for Christian Masons, and a kind of Deism for non-Christians, combined with a strong doctrine of reward and punishment in the afterlife.

Freemasonry transmitted to India both Romantic and Enlightenment thought (that philosophical constellation which includes rationalism, experimental science, a curiosity

for pre-Christian "wisdom," a universally applicable morality, equality, the idea of progress, societal perfectibility, economic liberalism, efficient government, political liberty, and the idea of the "citizen" in place of the "subject"). Freemasonry was in effect the "religion" of the Enlightenment: its theology was either Deistic or latitudinarian; its ethic, intellectual, moral, and material progress; and its vision for society, a rationally constructed universal brotherhood free from the hostility engendered by sectarian "superstition" and racial prejudice. At the same time, it was able to accommodate—even promote—romantic and mystical tendencies drawn from various sources. Hence, Freemasonry also became the foremost mystical and occult order of the modern West—the progenitor of most "new age" movements of our time.

II. THE MASONIC CULT OF FRIENDSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

According to Thomas Metcalf, "as the British put together an ideology for the Raj, they had to contend with the internal contradictions that bedevilled it, above all those between an insistence on India's difference, and a similarity they could never entirely repudiate."[6] These tensions grew more unmanageable over time, and by the later decades of the 19th century "the British devised a strategy built upon distancing and denial [of similarity]. The late nineteenth century marked the high point of the British retreat into the club and the hill station," for, as Kipling put it, the White must "'go to the White and the Black to the Black.'"[7] The overall result was that British contacts with Indian society greatly declined in all areas, and previous Orientalist British sympathy for, and attempts to understand, Indian life and culture were by and large replaced with indifference or suspicion (which generated a study of Indian society informed by the discourse of difference).[8] Freemasonry in India greatly complicates this view on two counts: first,

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[6] Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 160.

[7] Ibid., 160-61.

[8] See Ashish Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983, 1988), 11n.

Freemasonic speculation on, and engagement with, Indian religion did not at all diminish in this "high Raj" period, but actually accelerated, with Freemasonry being increasingly posited as an *ur*-religion and bridge between the various religions of the world, as we shall see in Chapter 4. Second, Freemasonry provided a heretofore little-studied private space in which not only Indians of various communities, but also Indians and Britons, interacted on a basis of parity and friendship. The British, in the end, could never be wholly successful in distancing themselves from Indians and India, "for much in India remained seductively attractive,"[9] and in the Masonic lodge the British found a place—a sacred space—where the White could go to the Black and call him "brother." Kipling himself did it, and stated that he "needed" this (see Chapter 7).

As early as the 17th century in Britain the Masonic lodge came to be seen as an arena of "friendship," which was the English technical translation for the Platonic concept of *agape* (*caritas* in Latin), defined, in the words of one contemporary, as "'the nearest love and the nearest society of which persons are capable.'"[10] According to David Stevenson, the cult of friendship

> was not an isolated phenomenon. It grew out of changing attitudes to religion which emerge strongly from the mid-seventeenth century, accelerated by the civil wars of the period. Seeing the wars as the culmination of hatreds and bloodshed based on fanatical and doctrinaire concepts of religion which had intensified since the Reformation and torn Europe apart, some sought new approaches to religion. In England the Cambridge Platonists reacted by seeing the true centre of religious belief and observance as lying in diffuse universal charity [i.e., *caritas/agape*] (the wider counterpart of personal friendship) and personal devotion, rather than fanatical devotion to upholding specific details of doctrine or public worship. Within the Church of England the latitudinarian tendency continued this trend towards an emphasis on personal religion, dislike of doctrinal squabbling, and willingness to tolerate different religious practices in others.[11]

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[9] Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 161.

[10] Quoted in David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590-1710* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 182.

[11] Ibid., 184.

Freemasonry was not the only movement attempting to spread the principle of divine friendship across sectarian and class lines, but it was the most organized, and it played a similar role in India.

Therefore, while its attempt to foster closer ties between the British colonizer and the Indian colonized could lead one to see Freemasonry as a "mask of conquest," to use Gauri Visvanathan's term for western education in India,[12] Stevenson shows that it had actually striven to deal with serious rifts in British society during a *pre-imperial* period (America excluded). Freemasonry's success in fostering fraternal feelings across doctrinal divides could, of course, serve colonial purposes, but this was certainly not the inspiration for Masonic brotherhood. Also, Freemasonry was a global institution, even more popular in the metropoles of colonizing powers than in the colonies themselves. And America, the largest Masonic country of all in the 19th century, certainly did not use Freemasonry as a tool of conquest, although it did serve an important function in national unification. According to Masons themselves, the goal of Masonic socializing and its cult of friendship—indeed, the "great end and aim of Freemasonry"—"is, the happiness of man; by bringing together men of every rank and station, annihilating prejudices of creed and profession, reconciling opposite temperaments, and cultivating good will and brotherly love among those who, otherwise, must have remained at a perpetual distance."[13] Freemasonry in India did this through mixed-race lodge membership (although this was not so common in Presidency capitals like Bombay), and, more expecially, through frequent inter-lodge visiting. According to Rev. John Lawrence, a Past District Grand Warden of Madras in the late 19th century, in India, visiting

> is carried on to an extent unknown in England, especially in the Presidency towns. There is possibly more *camaraderie*—every Freemason is known more or less to every other in the same district.

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[12] See Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
[13] "Masonic Equality," in *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May 1865): 42.

> Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis, Brahmans, and Buddhists are, of course, eligible for membership, and we are proud to greet as Brothers and Friends our fellow-subjects, natives of the great Indian Empire. The intimacy of the Lodge should be productive of nothing but good to both parties, European and Indian.[14]

Even earlier, one Bro. Verney, son of Sir Harry Verney, Baronet, M.P., spoke to the members of *Cheru ell* Lodge in Banbury, Oxfordshire, about visiting fellow-Masons in India, "and adverted to the contrast which a Lodge of white men presented to those which he had been in the habit of attending, where nearly all present were men of color. He spoke of the beneficial influence of Masonry in promoting a kindly feeling between Englishmen and the natives of India, and of the kindness which he received at their hands."[15]

This sort of fraternization could *undermine* colonialism—which I believe it ultimately did—first, by allowing Indians to call British Masons "brother" and thus assume airs of equality with, and expect equal treatment from, the British, both within the lodge and outside it; and second, by bringing together different communities of the colonized, thereby allowing them to "imagine" one nation out of many "sub-nations," to use Benedict Anderson's terminology.[16] Freemasonry did both: it made Indians feel like imperial citizens—through brotherhood with the British—*and* like Indians in a broader, national sense. So, while Margaret C. Jacob says of the Masonic lodges in 18th–century Europe, that they "became microscopic civil polities, new public spaces, in effect schools for constitutional government,"[17]—and this was certainly true of India (as will be

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[14] John T. Lawrence, *Sidelights on Freemasonry (Craft and Royal Arch)*, new and rev. ed. (London?: n.p., 1911?), 77. Interestingly, Lawrence also points out that caste restrictions "debar the strict Hindu from the social board, and it is no uncommon thing for a [Hindu] Worshipful Master and his [Hindu] Wardens to be maintaining order in the East, West, and South during the progress of a banquet, provided at the first named's expense, while he and they simply look on, partaking only of an occasional plantain" (78). British Freemasonry clearly did not impose on Indians a radical break with many caste or religious rules and customs, trusting instead to time and Masonic ideology to wear down gradually such restrictions on interdining.

[15] Taken from the *Freemasons' Magazine*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 5 (August 1865): 184.

[16] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

[17] Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 20. Jacob feels that the term "public" may safely be applied

examined in Chapter 8)—the lodge in India constituted a "public space" in another way: as a space for fraternal socializing and friendship, it lead to the lessening of class and caste distinctions between different groups of Indians. This was nothing new. In 18th and 19th-century Europe, one practical consequence of Masonic membership and socializing, writes historian J.M. Roberts, was its ability to diminish social barriers in "a highly stratified and divided" society:

> The most striking examples of its operation in this way are those provided by masons finding through lodges a mechanism which could introduce them into society in countries other than their own.... It could be important internally, too.... And freemasonry sometimes undoubtedly transcended class barriers in doing this, in spite of the limitations on the principles of brotherly equality in most lodges.[18]

This applies equally well to the relations between races and religious communities in 19th and 20th-century India. Moreover, when Indian Masons went overseas, Masonic credentials did provide access to "society" in other lands, which, of course, has important implications for the study of emerging global capitalist linkages, since Indians often went overseas for business.

Freemasonry's emphasis on socializing and its ability to foster brotherly love—if we are to accept the words of Masons themselves—are what make Masonry stand out from a mere philosophical movement, club, or learned society. Speaking of the importance of Masonic "refreshment"—i.e., the socializing and banqueting held at the conclusion of the ritual and administrative parts of the Lodge meeting—to the development of moral and fraternal sentiment, a piece from a 19th-century American Masonic journal (reprinted in the *Masonic Record of Western India*), states:

> Naturally given to the enjoyment of social life, his [i.e., the Mason's] best feelings respond, and the noblest traits of his character are shown, when formality is thrown off without reserve and 'good cheer' follows the close of the Lodge.... The cornucopia of the steward is there a symbol of plenty *in fact*—not a hollow show, and invites by its plenteousness 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul'—the

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to the Masonic lodge because its membership was so large and relatively diverse when compared to other voluntary organizations of the 18th century.

[18] J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 56.

> harbingers of unreserved communication; and amid the inviting aroma of the coffee beverage and the flavor of the sandwich, the joke and story, the song and repartee, the social points and best side of human nature crop out in veins before unknown and unfelt. At such banquets our ancient brethren cemented friendships that the stiff formalities of the Lodge room could never have discovered.[19]

If the Masonic *theory* of the banquet be put into practice, declares the article, "high and low, rich and poor, member and visitor meet in a fraternal manner that magnetizes and knits heart to heart, and forms friendships and establishes connections never to be broken."[20]

Such sentiments were espoused by Indian Masons, as well. In August 1867, when the Provincial Grand Master (Scottish Constitution), Richard B. Barton, his deputy Henry Morland, and James Gibbs, the District Grand Master for England in Bombay, paid a visit to Lodge *Rising Star*, the lodge's Master-to-be (in 1868), M.C. Murzban, gave a speech in which he touched on the ability of Masonry to create brotherly love between the races through inter-lodge visits:

> Amongst the many and invaluable privileges of Masonry, that of visiting each other's lodges is calculated to increase our Masonic knowledge, and tends to bring together brethren of different countries, of different creeds, and of different denominations, to combine and practice the grand principles of Masonry, Brotherly Lodge, Relief, and Truth.... These exchanges of visits strengthen the ties with which we are bound together; and while we enjoy ourselves at these festive boards, opportunities offer themselves for exchanging our sentiments, which do not fail to prove beneficial to those who avail themselves of them. Brotherly love is not a plant of hasty growth, consequently frequent visits to each other's lodges are necessary to become loving brothers.[21]

The minutes of this meeting are detailed and include many speakers dealing with topics such as Barton's inclusion of Natives into the Provincial Grand Lodge, and Gibbs' fostering of the first Native lodge under the English banner,[22] which clearly shows that

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[19] From *Mackey's National Freemason* (America); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 4 (July, 1874): 138. Albert Mackey was an American authority on Freemasonry. Perhaps this piece in his journal was authored by him.
[20] Ibid.
[21] M.C. Murzban, speech in Lodge *Rising Star*, August 20, 1867, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 6 (September 1867): 230-31.
[22] See *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 6 (September 1867): 225-33.

Indian Masons were keenly alert to how equitably their British "brothers" were treating them.

Nor were Indians slow to grasp the implications of such fraternizing. Believing that the Masonic cult of friendship had a special role to play in race relations, the Master of *Rising Star*, Rustomjee Bahadurjee, for example, exclaimed in 1867:

> Freemasonry is spread all over the world, but in India she has special ends to accomplish. If at this moment there is any institution which is *calculated to unite the governing and the governed in a bond of friendship and brotherhood*, it is, I humbly submit, this institution, and hence this Lodge, which is specially for the benefit of the Natives, holds a position peculiar to itself.[23]

"I have often heard it pointed out," stated the Parsi Orientalist K.R. Cama in 1877, "particularly at the banquets, by [Indian] brethren, in their post-prandial speeches, that one of the happy results attained by introducing natives into Masonry has been that of bringing them to closely associate, socially, with their European brethren—*I was almost going to say, masters*."[24] This final interjection speaks volumes for what Freemasonry meant to Indians, for Cama's experience in the outside world constantly reminded him that the British were indeed his masters, holding in their hands the reins of an arbitrary and unequal power, but he remembered at the last moment that he was speaking to Indians (mainly) who were *Masons*, and that in the lodge, at least, the British were brought down to a position of parity with Indians through their transmutation into "brothers." It may be, too, that Cama was deliberately used this interjection to demonstrate the power of Freemasonry to transform the master into a "brother," and thus an equal. Certainly few agencies in India at the time had the power to effect such social leveling. Nor would any other agency be able to do so for the rest of the Raj period. As K.R. Cama's words suggest, the lodge was a liminal space for the races, one where power

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[23] Rustomjee C. Bathurjee (also Bahadurjee and Badhurjee), speech to Lodge *Rising Star*, Dec. 20, 1867; in minutes of Lodge *Rising Star* for same date, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 10 (January 1868): 387 (my italics).

[24] Kharshedji R. Cama, "A Discourse on Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay," delivered at the Freemasons' Jamshedi Naoroz Festival, March 21, 1877 (Bombay: Times of India Steam Press, 1877), 5 (my italics).

hierarchies disappeared. But this private liminal space could not be kept private for long, and the social leveling which occurred in the lodge constitutes a heretofore-unstudied fount of Indian nationalism.

There were certain limitations on the principle of fraternity, though, as Roberts suggests above.[25] First, while lodges in the *mofussil* may have begun initiating Indians (Parsis and Muslims) in the 1860s, probably every European lodge in Bombay City maintained an all- or almost all-European membership, even though it would have been possible to accept joining members from Indian lodges, and visitors from Indian lodges were certainly not excluded.

Indians understood well the British penchant for clubbishness. At the same time, the British often looked upon Indians as caste- or community-exclusive in their social relations, and often blamed *them* for not mixing with Europeans more. E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, is a late example of the awkwardness which prevailed when Briton and Indian socialized, and of how this interaction could spiral downwards into tragedy. Nevertheless, there were occasional attempts to create institutional forums for socializing between Indians and Britons outside of Masonry. In 1873, for example, readers of the *Masonic Record* learned that the "Cosmopolitan Club, for Native as well as European gentlemen, has been opened at Madras."[26] But such attempts were rare and usually short-lived. A similar attempt had been made around 1855 in Bengal (in Calcutta, probably), when "'a number of the leading Civilians got up the 'Union' Club, to which Europeans

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[25] See, for example, Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*, trans. from the Hebrew by Leonard Oschry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 135-143. In terms of living up to the standard of universal brotherhood, British Freemasons in Bombay were far ahead of most of their German "brothers," although, as regards Bengal, the British Masons there were more like the Germans. Hindus and even most Muslims in Bengal were still excluded almost completely, but that was about to change in the early 1870s. Chapter 3 will examine this development. After the early 1870s, then, Freemasonry was theoretically open to all the races and religions of India.

[26] "General Intelligence" for October 1873, in *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 8 (November 1873): 299. One wonders if this did not involve Masons—Indian and Briton—attempting to carry interracial socializing within the lodge into the outer world. In the early 20th century, for example, Lord Willingdon, Governor of Bombay and also the District Grand Master of Bombay, lent his support to the formation of the interracial "Willingdon Club" in Bombay City.

and Asiatics might both resort; the experiment however failed, for it was found impossible to amalgamate such opposite extremes, and the Club, instead of being called the 'Union,' speedily acquired the nick name of 'Oil and Water,' two liquids which never could be mixed together.'"[27]

Beliefs in the essential difference between Britons and Indians—and even of class differences among Britons themselves—could make their way into the lodge, albeit in an attenuated form. For example, the English Constitution lodge, *St. George*, No. 549, not only did not have Indian members, but also was reputed to reject other Europeans who failed to pass muster in terms of class. *St. George* acquired a reputation as the snobbish, "aristocratic" lodge of Bombay.[28] So prevalent was this view that when another lodge, *Caledonia*, opened in March 1869, a correspondent to the *Masonic Record* wrote: "I hear that *Caledonia* is expected to be a *strictly* aristocratic Lodge, but next in order to *St. George*."[29] The reason such a tendency was attenuated in the lodge was because most Masons knew that this violated their fundamental principle of universal brotherhood. Even in the case of *St. George*, a letter to the editor of the *Masonic Record* in 1873, no doubt written by a lodge member, counters the unmasonic reputation the lodge had acquired. Taking a defensive tone, the author argues that

> Lodge *St. George* has hitherto had the reputation of being what is termed an aristocratic Lodge; and why? because its members are chiefly composed of the élite of society and limited by the By-laws to a small number; for years its meetings were held at Malabar Hill, the place of residence of most of its members, and few members of the other Lodges could make it convenient to attend there; since the removal of the Lodge to the Freemason's Hall, Mazagon, their meetings

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[27] Bro. Abbott, at Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal meeting, June 24, 1865; quoted in *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 6 (September 1865): 237.

[28] See G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India: A Study in Resolved Discords" (Prestonian Lecture for 1979), pp. 172-90 in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076), vol. 92 (1979): 178—"Then there was the class-consciousness of the English, especially in the Presidency towns which were seats of Government, and where Masonry tended to become dangerously stratified...." The subject of "class lodges" will be discussed in depth in Chapter 9.

[29] Letter to editor by "R.A.M.," April 30, 1869; in *MRWI*, vol. 6 no. 2 (May 1869): 69. Speaking of *St. George*, "R.A.M." states sarcastically that "a very edifying speech was recently delivered by the D.G.M. [i.e., District Grand Master, George Taylor] regarding *superior* Lodges and *superior* Masons, which was received with *rap*turous applause by *one* brother."

> were occasionally attended by a few members of other Lodges; but the same restraint as before seemingly kept back many from visiting the Lodge; even our redoubtable Brother Manockjee Cursetjee, the oldest native Freemason in Bombay, who has confronted Dukes, Kings, and Emperors, acknowledged that during the thirty years that Lodge *St. George* was in existence, he only three times visited the Lodge, and that by special invitation. The Worshipful Master, W. Bro. Winter, however disabused his mind, by reminding him that, according to the principles of Masonry, no invitation was necessary, that brethren who chose to visit them were always welcome. The hospitality and urbanity of the members towards their numerous guests (rich and poor) that evening [i.e., at the installation meeting of the lodge's officers in 1873], was a sufficiently convincing proof that the members of Lodge *St. George* do
>
> "Meet upon the level, and part upon the square,"
>
> a principle recognized by all true Masons.[30]

The discomfort felt by a member of what was perceived as the most elitist lodge in Bombay shows that elite British Freemasons there were at pains not to be perceived as racist or classist.

Not only in India, but in England, too, there was uneasiness in some quarters as to the level of easy familiarity which tended to occur in a number of lodges:

> The Emblem which symbolises the principle of Masonic Equality is the *Level*. It reminds us that God is no respecter of persons, and that in His sight all men are equal.... Yet this emblem stands not alone in its teaching; it is supported by the *Square* and *Plumb-line*, and while *that* inculcates the principle of equality with the foregoing wholesome truths, *these* enforce the observance of Order and Equity; and from them the brother of inferior talents and unexalted station receives instruction equally wholesome and profitable.... He is taught to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and particularly "to regard with peculiar esteem his brother of superior station in the world, when he sees him divested of pride, vanity, and external grandeur, condescending in the badge of innocence and bond of friendship to trace wisdom and follow virtue in company with those of inferior degree."... [T]o suppose that the moment an individual of rank and distinction in society becomes a Mason, he must, in addition to making himself social and agreeable, descend also, in sentiment, word, and action, is preposterous. Yet, that this impression prevails in many places, we have with pain observed; and having observed it, we are bound to reprobate, in unmeasured terms, so monstrous a perversion of this most delightful, most beneficial privilege.[31]

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[30] *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 12 (March 1873): 444.

[31] "Masonic Equality," in *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May 1865): 42-43.

In stressing the limits of brotherhood the article suggests a fear, too, that the notion of Masonic brotherhood could and did diminish class hierarchies outside the lodge and thus upset the social order. In principle, Masonry claimed to be able to maintain, in the psychology and behavior of Masons, a wall between the equality of the lodge-room—where Masons met "on the level"—and the social hierarchy of the "profane" world, which Masons re-entered when they "parted on the square."

How was the wall between governed and governors outside the lodge affected by visits of Indians to European lodges, or their membership in mixed lodges—as the case often was in the *mofussil*[32]? If Masonry had a problem maintaining such barriers within *English* society, it is to be expected that it had similar problems keeping up psychological barriers between Indians and Europeans when the two groups left the lodge-room. In other words, Indian Masons would not be able easily to "part on the square" *vis-à-vis* their European brethren when it came time to do so.[33]

III. THE REVIVAL OF FREEMASONRY AS A HISTORICAL SUBJECT

Despite its clearly prominent place in modern history non-Masonic scholarly literature on Freemasonry's role in the modern world is skimpy. One reviewer of new literature on Freemasonry, John L. Brook, argues that for

> several decades eighteenth-century freemasonry has been a topic of intense analysis in Britain, France, and Germany. Historians and historical sociologists working variously in traditions extending from both the Annaliste cultural turn and the Frankfurt School have argued that European freemasonry was the popular seat of the Enlightenment, and a fundamental dimension of the making of the new

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[32] Such as *St. Andrew's in the East* in Poona, *Barton* in Lonavla, or *St. Paul's* in Mhow. The last was heavily dependent on military membership, and when H.M.'s 72nd Highlanders had to leave the Station in early 1865, there were only twenty-two members at the February meeting, among whom were four Parsis and a Muslim. See minutes for Lodge *St. Paul's*, No. 389 (S.C.), Mhow, for February 10, 1865; in *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 12 (March 1865): 475.

[33] The square being a graded perpendicular tool used by builders, it is sometimes used to symbolize the various grades of social hierarchy, although usually it refers to moral behavior both within and outside the lodge.

> order of bourgeois nationalism. American historians have virtually ignored freemasonry, except for their examination of its nemesis, the Antimasonic Party.[34]

However, those "several decades" constitute about thirty years, and the studies are few. Most historians of the 20th century appear to have agreed with John Saltmarsh, writing in *The Economist* in 1937, when he described Masonic history as "'obscure and highly controversial,'" and "'by ill-luck the happiest hunting grounds for the light-headed, the fanciful... and the lunatic fringe of the British Museum Reading Room.'"[35] Indeed, according to Steven Bullock, a historian of the early American republic, until recently, "Freemasonry mystified historians. Faced with an institution that dressed its members in aprons and dubbed them Grand High Priests and Emperors of the East and West, scholars usually declined the interpretive challenge, ceding the field to enthusiastic but often credulous antiquarians and conspiracy theorists. This situation has begun to change in the past decade or so, however."[36] Bullock sees a number of new works and articles dealing with Freemasonry in the development of modern Europe as heralding "a new era in Masonic history, one in which accomplished historians take the fraternity... seriously" and see it as "intimately intertwined with the major issues of the eighteenth century, with hermeticism, the Enlightenment, and the rise of democracy."[37] Bullock, himself the author of one such book,[38] believes that the ideals of Masonic fraternity and the practices of fraternalism "were themselves revolutionary," for they were close to the center of the social and cultural changes that brought America (in his case) from the "aristocratic

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[34] John L. Brooke, review of Stephen C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840. Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Summer,1997): 145.

[35] Quoted in James Curl, *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1991), 10.

[36] Steven C. Bullock, "Remapping Masonry: A Comment," pp. 275-79 in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33.2 (Winter 2000): 275. June 18, 2001 <http://128.220.50.88/journals/eighteenth-century_studies/v033/33.2bullock.html>.

[37] Steven C. Bullock, "Initiating the Enlightenment?: Recent Scholarship on European Freemasonry" (review essay), pp. 80-92 in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 20.1 (February 1996): 81. Oct. 9, 2000 <http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/eighteenth-century_life/20.1er_stevenson.html>.

[38] Steven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

hierarchicalism of the eighteenth century to the democratic individualism of the nineteenth...."[39]

Within the last three decades—but especially in the last decade and a half—a number of historical monographs have come out on the Masonic movement. The research falls into four broad fields: (1) Freemasonry's role in the social and intellectual history of Reformation Europe;[40] (2) Freemasonry's role as a vehicle for Enlightenment thought, civil society, and politics in Europe and the emergence of a dominant bourgeois culture there.[41] Some of these works look at other organizations besides just Freemasonry, but Masonry usually occupies pride of place in the analysis because of the size of its membership; (3) Freemasonry's role in American society, economy and politics—this field is subdivided into two periods: Revolutionary and early Republic America,[42] and late 19th and early 20th-century America[43]; (4) Freemasonry's role in the British Empire.[44] There are a few works which do not fall into any of these broad fields.[45]

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[39] "Bullock responds to review of *Revolutionary Brotherhood*" (14 Jan 1998). Letter by Steven Bullock to H-SHEAR (H-Net Discussion Network for the Scholarship of the History of the Early American Republic). June 26, 2001 <http://mail.h-net.msu.edu/~shear/thread/bullock_responds_to_review_of_revolutionary_brotherhood.htm>.

[40] David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons: Scotland's Early Lodges and Their Members* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), and *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590-1710* (Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[41] Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans* (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1981), and *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); James Curl, *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1991); Richard van Dulmen, *The Society of the Enlightenment: the Rise of the Middle Class and Enlightenment Culture in Germany*, trans. Anthony Williams (orig. title, *Gesellschaft der Aufklarer*) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); also Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*, trans. from the Hebrew by Leonard Oschry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) deals in part with Jews, the Enlightenment, and Freemasonry.

[42] Steven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[43] Lynn Dumenil, *Freemasonry and American Culture, 1880-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[44] Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire: the English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism* (London; New York: Regency Press, 1989) and *Chains of Empire: English Public Schools, Masonic Cabalism, Historical Causality, and Imperial Clubdom* (London: Regency Press, 1991).

[45] In particular, J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*.

Since I look at Freemasonry as a vehicle for the transmission of Enlightenment thinking to India, as well as its peculiar contribution to British imperialism and Indian nationalism, I have found especially useful those works which deal with Freemasonry's role as the main organizational vehicle for Enlightenment thinking and as a place for Europeans to train themselves in and "live out" the Enlightenment ideals of fraternity, equality, constitutionalism, and civility.[46]

Freemasonry's role as a vehicle for the Enlightenment is forcefully put by Margaret C. Jacob (*The Radical Enlightenment* and *Living the Enlightenment*), who, building on J.M. Roberts' observations, contends that Freemasonry and its lodges constituted a unique "form of the new private sociability" typical of the Enlightenment. Like many other private societies that grew up in this period, members,

> proposed and chosen by other members, paid dues, attended meetings, voted and discussed, gave loyalty, and sought conviviality... from their association. What is characterisitic of the new private societies of the eighteenth century is also characteristic of freemasonry. Members were literate and affluent. Most important, they met out of mutual interest and not as a result of confessional affiliation, birth, or rank in society per se. And they always met separately from their families.... In short, they met as individuals.[47]

The same can be said of many of the Indians who became Masons in the 19th century. They, too, were literate and at least middle-class. And they, too, met as individuals, not as members of this or that caste or family, or of a particular religious community.

Yet, according to Jacob, Freemasons did more than just meet to converse. They inculcated the ideals of the citizen, which both fostered the development of civil society and was inescapably political in its implications:

> The improvement of the lodges lay in their ability to teach men identified by their supposed merit how to integrate enlightened values with the habits of governance. The lodges sought to civilize, to teach manners and decorum, to augment the order and harmony of civil society. They taught men to speak in public, to keep records, to pay "taxes," to be tolerant, to debate freely, to vote, to moderate their

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[46] See, for example, Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe.*
[47] Ibid., 20.

> feasting, and to give lifelong devotion to the other citizens of their order. By the late eighteenth century such men might assume a variety of political postures. Rather than imagine their affiliations with monarchs or democrats, we are on far firmer ground in arguing that they would have had affiliations, that they possessed a civic consciousness, that in one place if only for hours in the month, they had become citizens.[48]

In their lodges, Masons "established a constitutional form of self-government, complete with constitutions and laws, elections and representatives." In sum, the lodges "became microscopic civil polities, new public spaces, in effect schools for constitutional government. On the Continent, in every European country, even the Dutch Republic, the practice of this sort of governance was unique."[49] Jacob's research further develops and supports the conclusions of Jurgen Habermas, who sees the Masonic lodge as contributing to the creation of a somewhat egalitarian public sphere (despite the fact that the lodge was technically a secret and sacred space), and sees freemasonry "as anticipating the European-wide adoption of this sphere as an alternative to absolutism."[50] The reason that the term "public" may safely be applied to the Masonic lodge is because its membership was so large and relatively diverse when compared to other voluntary organizations of the 18th century. Indeed, for Jacob, in not looking at Freemasonry seriously, historians of the Enlightenment have missed "the one movement of the century that embraced its progressive aspects, was quantitatively much larger in membership than the academies, and provided one of the few forums where philosophes and their followers met with men of commerce, government, and the professions."[51]

I believe the same may be said for the Masonic lodges of India, for only there did Britons (many of them government officials) and Indians—whether Hindu, Muslim, or Parsi, and usually men of commerce or of the professions—meet "on the level" and call

[48] Ibid., 21-22.
[49] Ibid., 20.
[50] Ibid. See also Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 50-52, and 35. Jacob, however, wonders quite rightly why this greater egalitarianism did not include women, although she recognizes it as one of the contradictions of the Enlightenment as whole.
[51] Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 222.

each other "brother." Perhaps the Theosophical Society was able to do something similar, but it came later and it never had the same numbers (especially not of British administrators). Moreover, it had its roots in Freemasonry, as I shall demonstrate, and drew a certain amount of its membership from the Craft. Finally, the Theosophists in India even created their own Masonic institution—Co-Masonry—which only proves the success and popularity of the model supplied by Freemasonry.

In sum, in my view, the effect of these features of Freemasonry upon India during the Raj was enormous. Freemasonry in the 18th century had, after all, transmitted onto the Continent a vocabulary that put freedom and equality central on the "word list," and offered by the second half of the century an alternative model to traditional society which, writes Jacob, was a "microcosm of a new secular and civic, yet quasi-religious, political order we have now come to know simply as the modern world."[52]

The question arises: if Freemasonry is intimately connected with the rise of the modern West, as Jacob and others argue, to what extent did it facilitate the spread of Western modernity to the non-Western world, specifically India? In any discussion of Freemasonry's role in spreading Western Enlightenment modernity to India during the British Raj, it must be remembered that Britain was looked upon by other Europeans as the "vanguard nation" of the 18th and 19th-century Europe. Its government was seen as the most progressive in Europe, its class structure was less rigid than the rest of Europe, its technological skill was unsurpassed, and its economic strength was universally recognized. Freemasonry, which took its modern form in England in the early 18th century, was therefore viewed by other Europeans as part and parcel of Britain's progressive social and political character. "The lodges [of the Continent] were subsequently to play an important role in the dissemination of English constitutionalism throughout Europe."[53]

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[52] Ibid., 175 and 178.

[53] Peter Harrison, rev. of *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, by Margaret C. Jacob, *Historian*, vol. 57, no. 4 (Summer, 1995): 599-600.

The English Grand Lodge, founded in 1717, approved and strongly influenced Continental lodges until the Berlin Grand Lodge was set up in 1740 (possibly as a device of Frederick the Great to gain influence in Central and Eastern Europe). Nonetheless, as Margaret Jacob has pointed out, German Freemasons in the 1780's still identified "'our freedom [as] the tradition of the British nation,'" a tradition which "embodied British cultural values associated with the potentially subversive religious toleration, relaxed fraternizing among men of mixed and widely disparate social backgrounds, an ideology of works and merit, and not least of constitutions and elections."[54] Thus, in the rest of Europe Freemasonry was inextricably associated with British modernity. This must be remembered when considering Britain's role in fostering the emergence of an Indian bourgeois class, the very class which would form the bulk of Indian Masons and would develop the modern form of Indian nationalism. According to Peter van der Veer, "[t]here can be no doubt that the Western discourse on the nation, derived from the Enlightenment and refracted through the lenses of colonialism and orientalism, had a great influence on Indian secular nationalism in both the colonial and postcolonial contexts."[55]

Of course, the British Empire in India is also associated with the introduction of of a modern form of medievalism into India—what Hobsbawm and Ranger have identified as the "invention of tradition" in the modern West generally[56]—and Freemasonry was very much bound up with that, as well, for, perhaps even more than the Raj itself, Freemasonry had its own heraldry, medals, and titles, which fostered loyalty not only to the Craft but to the State, too. Freemasonry's medievalism, which harked back to the guild system, also included chivalric symbolism—the confluence of the

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[54] Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 151. J.M. Roberts takes a slightly more cautious position, arguing that while Masonic lodges could spread Enlightenment ideas, it "cannot be assumed that the lodges were hothouses of subversive ideas"—see J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, 55.

[55] Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 21-22.

[56] See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

"trowel and the sword," as Masons referred to these twin sources of ritual and symbolism. Unlike the Raj's medievalism, though, Masonic medievalism preceded and anticipated the romantic disenchantment with the positivist world of 19th-century Western bourgeois society. This only demonstrates that many needs were met by the Masonic "Craft." According to J.M. Roberts. He argues that the "movement of thought and sensibility which has been called 'Préromantisme' is already identifiable in the background even of early masonry," especially in its appeal to the "mysterious and the ancient," and Masonry "may well have been in some measure a substitute for a traditional religious practice which had come to appear empty and meaningless."[57] This is especially relevant to the nature of British imperialism in India and Indian nationalism, since British rule in India was both a vehicle for an Enlightenment worldview and for Romantic tendencies (Romanticism being the flip-side of the Enlightenment). Steven Bullock points out in his review of another author on Freemasonry, James Curl (*The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry*), that "Masonry's elements of mystery helped lead the Enlightenment into Romanticism."[58] That Enlightenment thinking and Romanticism manifested themselves in the modalities of British rule in India is well-recognized, first in the Anglicist/Orientalist debate[59] among British administrators in the early part of the 19th century, and then in the Progressive (or Modernist)/Feudalist debate in the latter part of that century. Such debates not only reflect attempts to consolidate British rule in India, but also represent a larger tension within Western modernity which Freemasonry was at the heart of. Eventually, this tension inform the discourse which Indians engaged in with the British colonizer and with other Indians, both in their quest for parity with the British in the administration of the Raj, and in their vision of an Indian nation.

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[57] J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, 57.

[58] Steven C. Bullock, "Initiating the Enlightenment?": 91.

[59] The Orientalist position actually represented both an Enlightenment *and* a Romantic discourse, while the Anglicist position rejected the Enlightenment veneration of ancient civilizations, adhering instead to the Enlightenment admiration for science and technology.

Looking in a more focused manner at the romantic, or medieval, side of British imperialism, P.J. Rich (*Elixir of Empire* and *Chains of Empire*) is primarily concerned with how the English public schools created lifelong ties among British imperial administrators, taught them ritual techniques necessary for ruling other peoples, and gave them the confidence to stare down the natives. He states, quite rightly, that "there is virtually no reference in studies of Imperialism to Freemasonry's part in the [British] Empire, but there is plenty of *Masonic* literature about Imperial Freemasonry."[60] "This," asserts Rich, "is a deficiency, because *successful* political rule has depended less on force than on, in Antonio Gramsci's much-quoted phrase, *cultural hegemony*."[61] Ritual, first learned in the public schools, and then perpetuated through Masonic lodges, was critical as a modality of rule, Rich believes, hence his approach is a cynical and instrumentalist one. While it cannot be denied that Freemasonry's role in the British Empire can at times be interpreted in an instrumentalist manner (and I will do this at times myself), surely if this had been the major impulse in bringing Masonry to India, Indians who joined the Craft would have sniffed this out sooner or later and left. Instead, the speeches of Masons—both British and Indian—indicate that they took the idea of universal brotherhood seriously (see above). If it were a sham, racist Britons in Bengal would have not fought so hard to keep Indians out (see Chapter 4), but rather would have invited them in, in order to consolidate imperial rule further. Fostering greater loyalty to the empire was seen as a good thing, not only by Britons but by Indians as well. If Freemasonry helped in fostering such loyalty, this need not be viewed cynically. There was strong idealism involved, too, and ultimately many British Masons re-imagined the Raj along more Masonic lines. P.J. Rich does not look at Indian Masons, except once, and there, too, only glancingly, presenting them as being thoroughly coopted by the British. Nor does he look at Masonic speeches by Raj officials. Rich casts Freemasonry as an

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[60] Paul J. Rich, *Chains of Empire*, 135.
[61] Ibid., 36.

extension of the hegemonic public school and its ritualism, neglects any other dimension of Freemasonry, and thus comes away from it with a distorted view. It must be remembered, too, that Freemasonry did not exist only in the British Empire but was spread throughout the Europe and many parts of the non-European world, especially the United States. Thus, unlike the English public schools, Freemasonry could never completely be pressed into the service of British or any other imperialism, although it could and did, as I will show, often support it. A small piece from 1865 about Lodge *Palestinæ*, No. 415 (Scottish Constitution) in Beirut gives sufficient evidence that Freemasonry often played a much different role in the non-Western world than what Rich attributes to it.

> ... it is rumored that Emir Rasslan, a Drusian Chief of the Libanon, a man of Armenian and French education, as well as Danid Pasha, the Turkish Governor of the Libanon, have resolved to join the Beyrut Lodge. This congregation will thus, by its lively spirit and persuasive activity, prove more than many other lodges that Freemasonry should be, and means to be, a truly humane confederation, and a link of fraternity between men of all creeds and of all countries.[62]

The Master of Lodge *Palestinæ* was a Greek; the Senior Warden, an Englishman; the Junior Warden, a Frenchman; the Treasurer, a German; and the Secretary, an Italian. Similar accounts are found throughout Masonic journals in the 19th century.

The fraternal solidarities of Freemasonry bear directly on the subject of nationalism and Benedict Anderson's thesis of the nation as an "imagined" fraternal community facilitated by literacy and print capitalism.[63] Loyalty to such imagined "nations"—conceived first by the modern, educated elites, who then go on to instill in the masses a loyalty to the "nation"—replace more parochial loyalties. I argue in this thesis that, in India at least, the Masonic lodge was a pre-existing, *real* fraternal community which provided the template for members to imagine a larger national community which resembled the lodge in its ideal of brotherly love and its tolerance. It is no accident, I

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[62] From the *Freemason's Magazine* (London), taken originally from the *Bauhütte* (German Masonic journal), reprinted in the *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 7 (October 1865): 256.

[63] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

believe, that important leaders in the early Indian nationalist movement were Freemasons, and it may be that in many other places the Masonic lodge will come to be seen as an important "missing link" to in Anderson's argument to explain the success of nationalism in the modern period (at least of the pluralistic type). Certainly for 18th-century Europe, says Margaret Jacob, Freemasonry "translated all the cultural vocabularies of its members into a shared and common experience that was civil and hence political" and which became "in each country, a universal national culture,"[64] where universal refers to the transcending of parochial forms.

In India Masons expected—in true liberal and Enlightenment fashion—that Freemasonry would grind down the traditional corporatist caste system and "create a social revolution in India."[65] Yet, as in the West, the destruction of traditional corporate loyalties and identities was not to be replaced with the atomized individual making contracts freely for his economic services in a highly centralized state with no intermediate non-governmental agencies, but by incorporating the individual into a new collectivity and identity—one not based on ascription or birth, but on "rebirth," in the Masonic "mother lodge," into a new and larger family with a more universally-binding set of familial obligations and sentiments:

> No one amongst us, be he ever so opulent, can exist without the assistance of his fellow-creatures; wants are numerous; we must be clothed, we must be fed, we must be waited upon in sickness. Where are we to look for such help but to our fellow-creatures; this one fact teaches us to have compassion for one another, to love as brethren, to view in each son of Adam a brother of the dust.... This is the symbolical language of the trowel known only to Master Masons....[66]

This did not preclude altogether the obligations one owed one's birth family and community, but it expanded the range of their application to "adopted" family members.

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64 Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 224.

65 D.R. Chichgur (Master of Lodge *Rising Star*) to J.N. Dady (Master of Lodge *Cyrus*), December 18, 1872; Appendix O in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 409

66 Past Master Berrie, quoted in Minutes of Lodge *Harmony*, No. 485, Karachi, for September 19, 1870; in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 7 (October 1870): 278.

Pluralism and tolerance were also inculcated in the lodge. Speaking for the United States, Mary Ann Clawson states that fraternalism's "tenuous unification of opposites, its symbolic resolution of conflicts—among religious sectarians, between young and old... wage workers and entrepreneurs—is part of what made fraternalism so appealing to its enthusiasts and what fascinates us today."[67] Not all of these opposites are applicable to the case of Freemasonry in India; however, the bringing together of religious sectarians (or rather those from different religiously ascriptive communities) *is* applicable. Freemasonry thus unwittingly created the first real Indian multiethnic "nation," but it did so in the covert space of the lodge, where it has gone unstudied for over a century.[68] Before long, however, the idea of this nation was carried into the larger society by men who had "lived out the nation" in the lodge, but who are now known only for their more public roles in early Indian nationalism.

The last word on the new historiography of Freemasonry goes to Steven Bullock:

> Divergent understandings of Masonry may be inevitable. Brothers adapted the fraternity to an extraordinary range of cultural and geographical settings.... A broad and nuanced view of European Masonry as a whole (let alone its experiences in other areas) may not be possible in the foreseeable future. But these robust and exciting works should exclude at least one possibility that previously seemed at least plausible—that Masonry was irrelevant to the eighteenth-century's most significant developments.[69]

IV. THE CHAPTERS

A. Chapters 2 and 3:

Despite Freemasonry's principle of universal brotherhood, many British Masons in India were both racially and religiously prejudiced, which led them to resist the admission of Indians into the movement. This sparked a contest between these British

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[67] Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood*, 243.

[68] Masons often prided themselves on the idea that Masonry, "although great, mainly works unseen and unheard."—"The Earl of Dalhousie and the Scottish Craft," the *London Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 11 (February 1871), 407.

[69] Steven C. Bullock, "Initiating the Enlightenment?": 91.

Masons and Indian aspirants for initiation which greatly resembled, and often prefigured, British resistance to Indian demands for a greater role in running the Raj. In Chapter 2, I examine the entry of Indians into Freemasonry in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in various parts of India, and the founding of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India* in Bombay for the initiation of "Natives." In Chapter 3, I focus on the debate in the 1860s over the admission of Hindus,[70] not only in Bombay but also in Bengal, which exerted a strong influence on attitudes taken in western India. This debate also centered on the question of "difference," but in the lodge, British Masons accepted—though sometimes grudgingly—Indians as their "brothers"; in the Raj, Indians were largely relegated to the status of permanent "others."

B. Chapter 4:

In looking at Western Europe in the 18th century, Benedict Anderson argues that it not only marks the age of nationalism, "but the dusk of religious modes of thought."

> The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning. As we shall see, few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation.[71]

In Chapter 4, regarding Freemasonry and the "Theosophical Enlightenment," I show how recent scholarship demonstrates that it was not a time of irreligion at all. Rather, the 18th and early 19th centuries saw various reformulations of religion along Enlightenment lines (a fascination with paganism, pre-Christian wisdom-religions, eastern religions, mysticism, etc.). Such experiments and explorations required a separation of church and state—that is, secularization. Moreover, the disenchantment with organized Christianity did not even originate in the Enlightenment, but in the wake of the Thirty Years' War of

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[70] Hindus were for the most part still excluded from Freemasonry because many British Masons held that Hindu polytheism and the caste system were irreconcilable with the Masonic notion of a monotheistic "Grand Architect of the Universe" and the principle of universal brotherhood.

[71] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

the early 17th century, when intellectuals grew weary of doctrinal differences and sought a Christianity which was latitudinarian. It was at this time that Freemasonry first became popular among intellectuals in Europe as a religious alternative to the established churches. Yet, Freemasonry, with its rejection of "stupid atheists" (as the early 18th-century *Book of Constitutions* calls them) strove mightily to preserve "pure religion" from the onslaught of materialistic philosophies, and stressed reward and punishment after death for deeds done in the flesh. So the "dusk" of religion in the 18th century that Anderson speaks of was only the dusk of state-established Christianity. This was the age when the discipline of comparative religions developed in the West, usually with the participation of Freemasons. With the British in India, information on Indian religions became readily available for both Masonic and non-Masonic "enlightened" religious speculation. Indeed, ancient India became, along with ancient Egypt, a major part of Masons' speculations about the origins of their own movement.[72]

Many Masons, both British and India, came to see Freemasonry as the pure, esoteric doctrine undergirding all religions. There was of course a dissent by some Christian Masons who saw in Freemasonry a "handmaid of Christianity," but it was a minority voice. The perception of Freemasonr as an *ur*-religion was important for two reasons: it contributed to British imperial consolidation, and it becames the basis for romantic Indian nationalism.

C. Chapter 5:

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[72] See, for example, *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 4 (July, 1874): 139—"The origin of Freemasonry is probably to be found in Egypt. In Egypt are to be found some of the earliest recorded attempts to teach ideas by symbols. Egyptian hieroglyphics remain to the present day, and... so does the Deva Nagari (sacred writing) of the Brahmins, which was probably derived from the Egyptians, and is nearly as old. In all likelihood the system spread from Egypt to India, and with the writing and moral teaching, restricted to the priest, spread likewise. Let me recommend to your notice the points of resemblance between our ceremonies and the mysteries of the old world; alike in Persia, India, Egypt, and Greece, where the seeker after Truth was initiated into a secret society, and subsequently underwent trials of his fortitude and fidelity.... and... was taught the attributes of the Most High God, and was entrusted with an Ineffable Name, and further taught the in his devotion to moral excellence how to efface his own will in carrying out the dictates of Divine Will."

Equally important to the rise of Indian nationalism was socio-religious reform of the "nation." Such reformism usually presented itself as a return to a purer version of religion (for which Masonic antiquarian and comparative religions studies were also handy): while "Freemasonry, as a gradual accretion of the Wisdom of Ages Immemorial, bears traces of many successive schools of thought," wrote one Masonic author, "all its messages are fraught with hope for the regeneration of humanity."[73] Indian Freemasons in the Bombay Presidency were leaders in religious reformism in their respective communities, whether Parsi, Hindu, or Muslim. It is not surprising, then, that the reformed religions they sought to construct should have looked so much like Freemasonry—void of "superstition," in conformity with science, and without "irrational" barriers, such as caste. (A century or so earlier in England, Freemasonry had done something similar, promoting a latitudinarian brand of Christianity.) Among the Hindu socio-religious reform movements connected with or led by Freemasons were the Prarthana Samaj and the Bombay branch of the Arya Samaj.

Did Freemasonry likewise provide the template, both ideologically and organizationally, for any of the Indian reform movements? It's hard to prove with certainty that Freemasonry had a major influence—or any influence—on any of them, since there is no outright statement by any of their leaders to that effect. This would have been difficult for them to make, since it was necessary for these movements to present themselves as expressions of indigenous religiosity through a return to some purer form of religion. Nevertheless, I believe that crossover membership in Freemasonry, as well as many points of similarity in ideology, indicate the probability that Freemasonry played an important role in informing these movements. Therefore, in lieu of a "smoking gun," my goal in Chapter 5 is to show that leading members of these movements were either Freemasons or future Freemasons, or that they were in the right place at the right time to know about Freemasonry or mix with Freemasons, in order to suggest the influence of

[73] John A. Cockburn, "Introduction," in J.S.M. Ward, *The M. M.'s Book*, 2nd ed. (London: The Baskerville Press, Ltd., 1929; orig. prior to 1923), xi.

Freemasonry on these movements. I have attempted to assemble what I consider to be too many connections not to conclude that there was no influence by Freemasonry. At the very least, crossover membership shows that Freemasonry could be a fellow-traveler with these movements.

D. Chapters 6 and 7:

In Chapter 6 I look at how Masonic ideology and ritual bolstered the British monarchical cult and contributed to the ideology of British imperialism, especially romantic imperialism. Freemasonry was strongly implicated in British royalism and was a major vehicle of British civil religion. In India its utility to the imperial venture was perceived by authors such as Kipling, who employed it in a romantic sense in various works. Finally, Freemasonry's own invention of tradition paralleled that of the Raj, even to the point where Masonic public rituals came to be coopted by the Raj, especially stone-laying ceremonies, sometimes performed by members of the Royal Family when visiting India.

Chapter 7 explores the connection between the Masonic activities of certain British administrators and "Politicals" and their attempts to consolidate and develop the British Empire in India. The movement's ritualism, religious theories, and romantic visions of the past could and did serve the need for cohesion in an imperial state. By the latter half of the 19th century, it was clear that the British Empire in India would not be united on the basis of a single religion, such as Christianity for the missionaries had failed at mass conversion. Freemasonry seemed to various British administrators to solve the problem of finding an ideology that could engender loyalty to the Empire across the racial and religious divide. Freemasonry was ideal, because it did not require that one apostatize one's religion, yet it was a quasi-religion, with its own ritual and teaching to which followers of all religions, it was thought, could subscribe. I look at the attempt to consolidate empire through the induction of elites from states surrounding India and princely rulers within India, and later through the appointment of Indian Masons to

government positions. I also show how British Masons split on the issue of how far brotherhood was to be taken. For Masons like Kipling, the equality of Indian and Briton in the Lodge was to stay in the Lodge. Others imagined a Raj which looked like the Lodge, expressed, for example, in the formation of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* in 1908. But the genie could not be kept in the bottle, and Indian Masons, having tasted of parity with the British in the Lodge, were not content to leave it behind when they left the Lodge.

E. Chapters 8 and 9:

These chapters deal with the role of Freemasonry and Freemasons in the development of modern Indian nationalism. Written constitutions, the rule of law, the attenuation of class differences, better treatment of women, both internationalism and "sane" nationalisms—all these were promoted through the ritual, administrative machinery, and socialization of the Masonic lodges. Especially important was the fact that Masonic government provided a training ground for Indians in democratic and constitutional government through the use of by-laws and constitutions; election of officers; clear individual rights and responsibilities; higher bodies as courts of appeal; rules of order; and even guides for minute-taking. All of this conditioned Indians to what Max Weber calls the "legal-rational" mode of authority and allowed them to participate in an environment characteristic of a liberal democracy even before they were allowed to do so in the larger society. This gave Indian Masons an "edge up" when they involved themselves in other organizations, especially political ones.[74]

Scholars have long noted the rise of the Indian western-educated middle classes in the 19th century, and their pivotal role in the formation of Indian nationalism. In India, as in many others places, Masonic affiliation often served as an expression of bourgeois class identity. An aspect of Freemasonry's modernizing agenda was the inculcation in its

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[74] In her *Living the Enlightenment*, Margaret Jacob's thesis is that the lodges of 18th-century Europe were the crucibles of modern democracy on that continent, so this function of Freemasonry was not unique to India.

members of such bourgeios social values as punctuality and the efficient use of time, the value of labor, appropriate forms of recreation, civility, and promise-keeping. These values coincided with and supported an emerging international capitalist economy, associated with the bourgeoisie. These values also comprised what the British in India often referred to as "character," which became the touchstone by which they determined the extent to which Indians should be allowed to participate as equals in running the Indian Empire.[75] Freemasonry was greatly concerned with the issue of character, and this allowed the British to trust Indian Freemasons with responsible positions both inside and outside the lodge. I suggest that this may explain why a disproportionate number of Indian Masons in the Bombay Presidency were appointed to serve in official positions, especially in Provincial Legislative Councils. At the same time, Indians, by serving with, and being increasingly accepted by British Freemasons (many of them government officials) in the administrative work of the "Craft," found it difficult not to think that they should be accorded similar responsibilities by their British "brothers" on the outside. The quest by Indians for parity with the British in the Raj did much to inspire modern Indian nationalism, as is well known.

Chapter 9 explores the direct involvement of Indian Masons in political organizations, both in England and in India, culminating in the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885. Among Indian political leaders in the early Congress period, and even before, there were a number of Masons: Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Narayan Chandavarkar among those in Bombay. In Bengal, I know of W.C. Bonnerjee and Rash Behari Ghosh. What these men wanted was respect, to be treated like equals, to be "brothers" with the British in running India just as they were Brothers with them in the lodges.

If Freemasonry could support nationalism, it could also support what Benedict Anderson calls "sub-nationalism," maintaining and promoting the ideologies of

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[75] See Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 24, 220.

universalism, nationalism, and sub-nationalism in a dynamic tension that was unique to Freemasonry.[76] Freemasonry's engagement with nationalism and sub-nationalism was in part due to romantic notions based on Masonic antiquarianism.

Masons were Moderates and Liberals in India, not radicals, and in 1917 many Masons who were politically minded entered the Indian Moderate Party after the Congress was seen to be excessive in its demands. Yet even these Moderate Masons did not relinquish their demand for parity with the British in the political sphere.

V. THE *MASONIC RECORD OF WESTERN INDIA*

My primary sources for this dissertation include lodge minute-books from India, lodge chronicles, data found in lodge membership records, and contemporary Masonic journals. In the case of the latter, I have relied heavily on the *Masonic Record of Western India*, which is rich in material about the Masonic community throughout India and the world during the 1860s and 1870s, and a number of whose volumes I fortuitously found in the library of the Freemasons' Hall in Bombay.

Founded in 1864, each issue of the *Masonic Record* was a forty-page miscellany of local and international Masonic news; a general (i.e., non-Masonic) news summary for the previous month covering India, Europe, America, and Asia; selected articles and essays from Masons throughout the world (mainly Britain and America, but also France and Germany[77]) regarding Masonic mysteries, morality, science, and antiquities; poetry by Masons (internationally selected again); letters to the editor; editorials; minutes of Bombay Presidency (mainly) lodge meetings, which had been submitted by lodge secretaries; Quarterly Communications (i.e., meetings) of the Provincial or District Grand

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[76] See, for example, Steven C. Bullock, "Remapping Masonry": 278—"Masonry expressed the tensions, ambivalences, and contradictions of people's lives. It thus provides a particularly telling site for examining the messy, problematic inconsistencies of experience. This range of different elements also allowed Masonry to be extraordinarily flexible."

[77] See, for example, *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 3 (June 1867): 89 (incomplete), for a French Mason's review of the *History of Freemasonry, From Its Origin up to the Present Day*, by the German author, J.G. Findel. The review, taken from the *Bulletin du Grand Orient de France*, was translated by Bease himself.

Lodges in the different Presidencies; and meeting times and places of Bombay Presidency lodges. As the founder and editor, George Bease, put it on the opening page of his first issue:

> ... all that can be said regarding it [i.e., Freemasonry] is embodied in the erudite and masterly works of that prince of Masonic authors, the Rev. Dr. Oliver, as well as those of Preston, Laurie, Hutchinson, the "Freemasons' Quarterly Review (now the Freemasons' Magazine)," and many others, not forgetting our Translatlantic brethren, who have also laboured so earnestly in the Cause. It will be our duty from time to time to display the Beauties of Masonry in our pages, to watch the progress of its effects, and encourage its inculcation among ourselves.[78]

The *Masonic Record* was printed at the Education Society's Press in Bombay[79] (George Bease was a "reader in the Bombay Education Society's Press"[80]), and a few years later at Jabalpur. Bease had eight distribution agents for India—four of whom were Indians (all Parsis)—located at Poona, Mhow, Jabalpur, Madras, Mussoorie, Punjab, Multan, and Nassick-Egatpura. Thus, it was a largely pan-Indian journal in distribution (excepting the Bengal Presidency, where Bease and W.H. Hoff, editor of the *Indian Freemasons' Friend*, traded articles), and so would have linked Masons together from throughout this vast territory. I am not sure how long the *Masonic Record* lasted. I found volumes covering 1865 to 1877, and one volume for 1883-84. The issues of this latter volume show that they were printed at the Railway Service Press at Allahabad—far from Bombay Presidency. They lacked a general news section and had little reporting on lodges working in Bombay or Western India—common features of the volumes up to 1876. Instead there was more reporting on Bengal, South India, Australia and New Zealand. Clearly the orientation, along with the headquarters, of the *Masonic Record of Western India* in the 1880s had shifted closer to Bengal, although the name remained the same. Also, these later issues contained long serializations of Masonic-related fiction lifted from foreign publications. While the earlier issues had these, too, they were not as

[78] *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 1 (April 1864): 1.

[79] Around November 1874, the *Masonic Record's* Press was shifted from Bombay to Jabalpur (causing the Dec. 1874 issue to be late in getting out).

[80] *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 7 (October 1865): 126.

common. All this leads me to conclude that the 1883-84 volume represents an attempt to revive the *Record*, which probably lapsed when George Bease either left India or died (although I have no knowledge when either of these might have happened).

Masonic publications in 19th-century India opened up to their readers a vast world by telling them of the intellectual currents of the age, whether in government, science, or health; by reporting news, both Masonic and non-Masonic; by exploring history, archeology, and comparative religions, especially the meaning of religious symbolism; and by promoting moral virtues, both public and private, thus inculcating a model of social relations—and, by extension, a model of civility and citizenship. Masonic journals from all over the world appear to have borrowed often and freely from each other, thus reinforcing the sense in Masonic readers that they were indeed part of a world-wide order—one inextricably linked by the bonds of brotherhood. For example, the Bombay-based *Masonic Record of Western India*, founded in 1864 by George Bease, often borrowed articles and news items from W.H. Hoff's *Indian Freemasons' Friend,* established in 1855 and published out of Calcutta.[81] (The latter, which I did not have access to from Bombay and Delhi, would, I am sure, provide intriguing information on race relations between British officials and the Bengali *bhadralok* in the lodges.) Both journals, in turn, borrowed heavily from English and American Masonic journals which were sent them, for example, the *Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror*,[82] published in London, and the American *National Freemason* out of New York.[83]

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[81] According to an article by W.H. Hoff, "Masonic Journalism in India," the *Indian Freemasons' Friend* was revived in 1861, indicating a lapse in the publication of the journal for some period between 1855 and 1861. See the *Indian Freemasons' Friend*, cited in the *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 2 (May 1867), pg. 43.

[82] This had originally been the *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, but by at least 1864 had become the *Freemasons' Magazine*—see *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 1 (April 1864): 1. Sometime in the mid-19th century the *Freemasons' Magazine*, which seems to have been closely connected with the Grand Lodge of England, merged with the *Masonic Mirror* to form the *Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror*—see Roy Wellis' comment to Ellic Howe, "Fringe Masonry in England, 1870-85," in *Ars Quatuor Coronatori*, vol. 85 (1972)(pp. 242-95): 282.

[83] For example: "We have received another number of the *National Freemason*, and have marked some of its contents for transfer to our own pages." *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 7 (October 1865): 249.

For those owners of Masonic journals who sought it, financial support from higher administrative bodies could be hard to get. When Bease was getting the *Masonic Record* off the ground, he submitted a prospectus of the journal to the Provincial Grand Lodge (Scottish Constitution) in Bombay at a Quarterly Communication on March 26, 1864, asking for its monetary support in the *Record's* production. "The question was decided in the negative, it being deemed that a Masonic publication was not necessary in W. India, when London and Calcutta published cheaper ones."[84] However, Bease was not daunted by the Scots national trait of thriftiness and went ahead with the publication of the first issue in April using his own funds. The P.G.L. seems to have softened somewhat after reading a journal published in its hometown, for at a meeting on Sept. 24, 1864, it was agreed that "as the Prov. G. Lodge did not authorise the publication of the 'Masonic Record of Western India' it did not hold itself responsible for anything published therein, but permission was accorded to Lodge Secretaries to furnish reports of Lodge proceedings, provided that no matter got into print which could, in any way, injure Masonry"[85] (there was still no offer of money, though!).

Making money from the *Masonic Record* was difficult, and it seems that for Bease, the journal was a labor of love:

> So far as pecuniary matters are concerned, the past has been to us a blank, owing to the many *bad paymasters* (most of them in the receipt of monthly salaries ranging from 500 to 1,500 Rupees) who have taken the journal for three, four, and five years, but will not pay, nor have they even the courtesy to reply to a civil letter. We will not repine, but hope that better days are in store, and by the help of those kind-hearted brethren who are enlisting fresh subscribers for us, we hope in time to be able to overcome our difficulties.[86]

This unwillingness on the part of many in the Masonic rank and file to become paying subscribers seems to have been a common problem throughout the world, causing many

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[84] Provincial Grand Lodge Quarterly Communication, March 26, 1864. In A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 78.

[85] Provincial Grand Lodge Quarterly Communication, Sept. 24, 1864. In ibid., 79.

[86] George Bease, "Ourselves," in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 1 (April 1875): 1 (italics in original).

Masonic journals to go under after a few years.[87] Most Masons, it seems, preferred to read and not pay (this is peculiar, given that Masons were known for their charitable giving!). Lodges, it seems, *were* reliable subscribers to Masonic journals. For example, in 1864, Lodge *Rising Star of Western India* became a subscriber to the *Scottish Freemasons' Magazine*, and, in 1865, to J.J. Farnham's *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, as well as the London-based *Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror*.[88] And Lodge *Rising Sun*, No. 506 (S.C.), subscribed to the *Masonic Record* in January 1872, soon after that lodge was established.[89] Hence, such journals, and especially the *Masonic Record* seem to have been widely read by Indian Masons[90] (even if it was undersubscribed) and so its articles and opinions provide us with an good idea of what Indian Masons thought they were about, at least during the early decades of the second half of the 19th century.

Benedict Anderson argues that the novel and newspaper "provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation."[91] For the Freemason, though, the Masonic "nation" would have been one which was global (or "universal" and "cosmopolitan," as the Masons put it). This was to be expected in a world which had now become linked through industrial capitalism and through new communications technologies such as the telegraph—what Tom Standage calls the "Victorian Internet," in his book of the same name.[92] Hence, Anderson ignores the fact that mass readership could extend around the world, reinforcing pre-existing global

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[87] See, for example, "The Prospects of Masonic Literature," from Britain, in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 4 (July 1875): 131. This piece describes the situation on both sides of the Atlantic.

[88] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342, S.C.*, 148-49. This was in addition to the *Masonic Record*, to which it often sent copies of minutes—see ibid., 151.

[89] Minutes for Lodge *Rising Sun* for January 20, 1872; in *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 1 (April 1872): 28.

[90] For evidence of this, see *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 4 (July 1865): 152-53, where the minutes of Lodge *Rising Star* for June 20, 1865 state that the Secretary, M.C. Murzban, "has found that the *Masonic Record*, which is subscribed for by the Lodge and is circulated amongst all the brethren, is read with much interest by them."

[91] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 25.

[92] See Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers* (New York: Walker and Co., 1998). For Anderson, the nexus of capitalism and communications technology occurred earlier, with the first mass-consumed product—the book—which gave rise to a mass readership, and which in turn made it possible to imagine the nation as a mass of fellow members—see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 33-34.

identities—identities based on ritual fraternalism. The community of the "mystic tie" which Masons in India encountered in their periodicals was not restricted to India, but encompassed the world. "Our aim is to give our brethren intelligence from all parts of the globe," declared George Bease, editor of the *Masonic Record of Western India*.[93]

Freemasonry easily constituted the most widespread and best organized international movement of 19th century, and the psychological effect of knowing that one could cross national and even imperial boundaries and find strangers whom one could trust and who would offer sociability—and help, if needed—would have been profound and impressive. Masonic journals reinforced this international identity, engendering a sense of unity with other, distant members of the Masonic "nation," or "empire." Even non-Masons would have had access to such periodicals and books. Thus, reading in his local Masonic journal the published minutes and proceedings of a lodge or District Grand Lodge in, say, Bengal, or even Ohio, a Bombay Mason would certainly have experienced a sense of what Benedict Anderson calls modern "simultaneity." He would have felt connected to, and part of, his "brothers" in these distant lands. To be sure, minutes from lodge or District Grand Lodge meetings in Bengal were published frequently in the *Masonic Record*, whereas those from America were not. But Grand Lodge of England proceedings were not uncommon in the pages of the *Record* (for obvious reasons).

Indians got involved in the production of Masonic journalism in the 19th century, too. Prosonno Coomar Dutt—the Bengali who got the doors of Freemasonry opened to Hindus in 1872 (see Chapter 3)—became the editor of the *Indian Freemasons' Almanac and Diary* in the last quarter of the 19th century.[94] This publication gave "'numerous details as to the Lodges, Chapters, and other bodies in India and Burmah under the English and Scottish Constitutions, as well as complete registers of the District Grand

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[93] George Bease, "Ourselves," in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 1 (April 1875): 1.
[94] This was earlier called the *Bengal Freemasons' Almanac and Diary*; see next.

Lodges and [Royal Arch] Chapters."[95] In short, this annual publication allowed Masons to learn the locations of Masonic lodges throughout the subcontinent and Burma, along with their meeting dates. Hence, wherever a Mason traveled in India, he would always be able to find his brethren if they existed at his destination. One can imagine the sense of psychological unity with unknown members of the Masonic "nation" that this conveyed to readers of the *Diary*. Benedict Anderson speaks of the novel and newspaper being able to do this, but so did this *vade mecum* in the Masonic world of India. And more than the *sense* of psychological unity the novel or newspaper might instill between one reader and others in the imagined nation, Masonic publications such as this one, actually helped to foster face-to-face contact with strangers—strangers whom one could trust and from whom one could expect a hospitable welcome, and even a helping hand in an emergency.

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[95] *The Freemason* (a journal), London, 1891; quoted in *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry and a Short Masonic Career of the First Hindu Mason* (Anonymous; Calcutta: Victor Printing Works, 1900), 38. See also Minutes of the Quarterly Communication of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal for March 20, 1875, in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 2 (May 1875): 66, where P.C. Dutt and H.H. Locke are praised by the acting District Grand Master, John B. Roberts, for their work on the *Diary* for 1875: "I hardly know how any real working Mason could manage to get on without his Bengal Diary. I know at any rate that I could not." It appears that Dutt took on the sole responsibility for the *Diary* sometime after 1875.

CHAPTER 2

"RACE, RELIGION, AND MASONIC BROTHERHOOD," PT. 1: MUSLIMS AND PARSIS

> Masonry is a science confined to no particular country, but extends over the whole terrestrial globe. Wherever arts flourish, there it flourishes also. Add to this that by secret and inviolable signs, carefully preserved among the Fraternity, it becomes a universal language. Hence many advantages are gained; the distant Chinese, the wild Arab, and the American savage, will embrace a Brother Briton, and know, that besides the common ties of humanity, there is still a stronger obligation to induce him to kind and friendly offices.[1]

I. INTRODUCTION

Although this description suggests the superiority of Western civilization to that of "wild" Arabs and "savage" American Indians, it nevertheless identifies Freemasonry as a universal organization which not only reaffirms and reinforces the feelings of common humanity, but inculcates the deeper, familial, bond of brotherhood which alone can overcome a feeling of "otherness" caused by cultural and religious disparities. In their lodges, Freemasons are to call each other "Brother" freely, and not "Mr." or other worldly titles.[2] The principal of fraternity among people of different religions and nationalities can be traced in Masonic literature at least as far back as James Anderson's *The Constitutions of the Freemasons*, published in 1723, which quickly became the ideological and procedural handbook for much of the Anglo-American Masonic world. Here, the first charge of a Freemason ("Concerning God and Religion") states that a Mason

> is oblig'd, by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever is was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular

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[1] A mid-18th century definition of Freemasonry, quoted in George Oliver, *The Book of the Lodge*, 3rd ed. (Wellingborough, Northhampshire, England: Aquarian Press, 1986; 1864), 10-11. Also, repr. in *Masonic Record for Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 2, no. 6 (September 1865): 207.

[2] See *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 4 (July, 1875): 125.

> Opinions to themselves; that is, to be *good Men and true*, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the *Center* of *Union*, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.[3]

The enunciation of a theory of fraternity, however, will always be easier than its implementation, for human beings also have a tendency to use kinship ties, whether fictive or real, to exclude others seen as being outside the "family." When the British brought Freemasonry to India in the early 18th century, it was inevitable that sooner or later they would have to deal with the question of whether or not to allow in Indians, who were non-Christian and non-European. India was perhaps the first country outside Europe and America where this issue would be brought to a head, and it was to be debated in the 19th century among Masons, with important consequences both for the Indian Empire and the development of Indian nationalism.

As the above passages from Oliver and Anderson demonstrate, the dominant (though often contested) theoretical stance within the movement in the Anglo-American world and certain Continental countries—most notably France—was truly universalist. However, lodges in other parts of Europe, especially the Germanies, switched positions a number of times over the late 18th and the 19th centuries on whether or not to exclude non-Christians. To assess how effective Freemasons in British India were in overcoming the barriers of race and religion, it is useful to compare Indian demands and British responses with the struggle of certain other non-Christian or non-white groups who sought admission into Freemasonry in countries other than England: namely, in the Germanies and America.

A. Jews and German Freemasonry:

In Continental Europe, an important test of the principle of Masonic brotherhood came with the attempt by Jews to join German lodges, beginning in the 1780s. Their struggle to become Freemasons was protracted, yet often successful (but in various parts

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[3] James Anderson, comp., *The Constitutions of Freemasons, 1723: Reproduced in Facsimile From the Original Edition* (London: Bernard Quaritch Limited, 1923), 50 (italics in the original).

of Germany, ultimately unsuccessful) and paralleled their struggle for civil rights in the larger society.[4] In most German states at this time, Masonry was still restricted to Christians. By the 1820s, although there was support in many German lodges for allowing Jews to join, as evidenced by debates on the issue, yet, even where lodge majorities were sympathetic to the entry of Jews, policies were not changed, because those who favored Jewish membership "were afraid that the implementation of a majority decision would lead those who considered Christianity... a sine qua non for Masonry to leave the lodges." Beginning a decade or so later, though,

> there was a marked increase in the number of middle-class Jews who had acquired some education and financial independence, and whose achievements could bear comparison with the corresponding level in gentile society. These Jews sought appreciation and recognition of their achievements in accordance with the criteria accepted in their environment. Since membership in the Masonic lodges had become a badge of the social elite, to bar the entry of Jews into that organization was to deny them a benefit they considered themselves fully entitled to receive....
>
> Anti-Jewish Masons often argued that in their efforts to join the Masons, Jews were more deeply motivated by a craving for social prestige than were gentile candidates.... Acceptance in the Masonic fold had a twofold significance for the Jew: a sense of personal accomplishment, and the overcoming of the social barrier blocking his group.[5]

According to Jacob Katz: "Here in microcosm is the story of the Jewish community's struggle for full emancipation, a struggle which reverberated through all the German states for more than two generations."[6]

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[4] See Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*; trans. from the Hebrew by Leonard Oschry (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970), 4. In the mid-1840s, it appears that the Prussian Grand Lodge had again adopted a position that Freemasonry was for Christians only and that Jews should be excluded. This led to much agitation among Masons in England, and the Grand Lodge of England was put in the uncomfortable position of investigating a Grand Lodge which it had close relations with. See *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, second series (London) (September, 1845): 316-317, and (December, 1845): 391-94. In 1848, according to Katz, the revolutions in Germany created instability in the ranks of Freemasonry there, and many lodges softened their stance on Jews, but a reaction set in once the revolutions fizzled and the Jews were again not allowed entry into many lodges (see Katz, 128-32). The 1860s saw the "greatest decline of anti-Semitism in Germany," and the ability of Jews became easier once again (Katz, 137).

[5] Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723-1939*, 212.

[6] Ibid., 210.

This struggle strikingly resembles, and anticipates by only a few decades, the attempt by Indian to join the "Craft." As with Jews in Europe, the struggle of Indians to get into Freemasonry should be seen as the story, "in microcosm," of their struggle for parity with the British generally. Of course, Indians, unlike Jews in Europe, were not a minority in their own country. However, their status in the British colonial state resembles that of the Jews in Germany, for Indians were not full citizens in their own land. Freemasonry was a way for Indians to meet Britons—often official Britons—in an arena of intimacy and parity. Even if some of these official Britons secluded themselves in lodges which did not accept Indians, Indians could still meet them through inter-lodge visits or, less frequently, at District Grand Lodge meetings (usually held quarterly). Leaving aside for the time being the question as to whether Indians saw in Masonry a vehicle for upward social and political mobility within the British-Indian state, merely being able to interact with the British as brothers surely boosted Indian Masons' sense of self-worth and self-respect. This is not to say that the decision to apply for Freemasonry on the part of Indians was solely or primarily actuated by the desire to relate to the British as equals, but, like the Jews of Germany a little earlier, the access which Freemasonry offered to those who were politically dominant was surely too intriguing not to tempt Indians to investigate the Craft.

B. Black Americans and Freemasonry:

In America, African Americans unsuccessfully sought entry into the "Craft," which was still an all-white preserve, and in the late 18th century they went on to create their own Masonic organization, Prince Hall Masonry, which was viewed by other American Masons as "irregular" (i.e., without a proper founding warrant from any recognized Grand Lodge). Although the exclusion of blacks does not seem to have been codified anywhere, it was generally "understood," in the individual lodges.[7]

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[7] See, for example, *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 12 (March 1869): 443—"A good deal of agitation is going on in America in regard to negro lodges, not that there is any aversion to making negro masons, but that several negro lodges have combined and established Grand Lodges of their own, which has given rise to some

In an 1868 article entitled, "Freemasonry Among the Blacks or Men of Colour in America," from the *Bulletin du Grand Orient de France*, and reprinted in the *Masonic Record of Western India*, we find that in the antebellum South, "Masonry could not be kept [by white Masons] from the unfortunate blacks and coloured men, and many of them having sought the light in foreign lands, were initiated into its mysteries. They succeeded so well, that in the course of fifty years, they established Lodges of people of their race, and even a Grand Lodge was formed."[8] However, the "white Masons of all the European Lodges disowned these brethren, whose only crime consisted in their sable hue; they even treated them as spurious Masons, refusing to admit them to their Lodges, and systematically excluding from affiliation those who wished for that favor."[9] After the Civil War, things were no better for blacks, *except* in New Orleans, where the French Grand Orient had established an independent Supreme Council of New Orleans. Since the Supreme Council derived its legitimacy from the Masons of France, it was not under jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, which followed the York Rite)[10] In 1867 the Grand Master of that Supreme Council, Eugen Chassaignac, looked into the matter of blacks wanting to become Masons, and determined that "the injustice of ill-treating them was contrary even to the interests of the white man, and he proceeded to restore to them their [Masonic] civil rights and privileges.... [and the lodges under his jurisdiction] took the resolution of opening their Lodges to Masons of the negro race henceforth."[11] Soon

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angry discussion." As mentioned above, there was indeed an aversion to making Masons of African Americans, and that is precisely why they felt compelled to found their own Grand Lodge system.

[8] "Freemasonry Among the Blacks or Men of Colour in America," translated [by George Bease?] from the *Bulletin du Grand Orient de France*, and reprinted in the *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 4 (July, 1868): 127. It is unclear whether or not the author is referring to Prince Hall Freemasonry, which is normally given a geneology that goes back to the colonial period, when a freedman, Prince Hall, was initiated in a British military lodge. Only since the late 1990s have the two superstructures of black and white Freemasonry been merged in most states.

[9] Ibid.

[10] This is the rite and grand lodge system which predominates in Britain and the United States (although the Scottish Rite has done remarkably well in the latter). Both can confer the three degrees of Masonry and mutually recognize Masons "made" under the other rite. The same goes for Masons "made" in the French Grand Orient system (although, later, when the Grand Orient of France did not require initiates to believe in God, this mutual recognition was halted by the British and most American Grand Lodges).

[11] *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 4 (July, 1868): 128

after, in what must have been a moving ceremony for all concerned, in a New Orleans lodge (Lodge *La Liberté*, No. 9, Orient of New Orleans), one could witness "for the first time Masons of the different races taking each other by the hand." Although, "regular" Negro lodges under the Supreme Council's jurisdiction were afterwards founded, "it must be remembered that this triumph was not achieved without encountering the most determined opposition from among the York Masons in the New World."[12] In other words, Anglo-American Freemasons, unable to overcome their prejudices, were vehemently opposed to black Masons having their own lodges even if these were properly and "regularly" constituted. Perhaps, too, they understood the consequences for white domination in the outer, or "profane," world if black Masons were treated as "brothers." White racism in America meant that blacks were permamently to be treated as "others." Only Franco-American Masons were not overly troubled by the matter—perhaps because they, too, were now a marginalized group in Anglo-controlled Louisiana.[13] However, it appears that such French-warranted Negro lodges did not extend geographically far beyond New Orleans, whereas Prince Hall Masonry—which white Americans had an easier time denouncing as "irregular"—succeeded in spreading across the continent. Yet, despite their racial prejudice, it is remarkable that white American Masons do not appear to have been willing to betray, in any formal or official way, the Masonic principle of brotherhood by creating new by-laws to keep out blacks. In Bengal, by contrast, their British cousins would act quite differently towards Indians, as we shall see in the next chapter. However, on the other side of India, the British in Bombay would take the first steps in the subcontinent to systematically initiate Indians. This may explain why Indians never felt compelled to form an "irregular" kind of Masonry similar to Prince Hall Masonry, or to go abroad for initiation and then form a legitimate parallel lodge system

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[12] Ibid. The Grand Orient of France though, not the Supreme Council of New Orleans, was the first to grant a warrant for a lodge for "men of colour" in the New World: at Guadaloupe in 1836 (see ibid.).

[13] Although the case of Guadaloupe does suggest that French Freemasonry was less infected with racism generally. Interestingly, the first Parsi Freemason was initiated in a French lodge (see below).

upon returning. Thus, Indians, in their quest to become Masons, resembled more the Jews of Europe, who sought admission into the "regular" lodges of Germany.

I. THE FIRST INDIAN MASONS

The first Indian Mason on record was a Muslim, Umdat-ul-Umara, the future Nawab of the Carnatic (i.e., the Nawab of Arcot).[14] He was initiated in 1775, in Lodge *Perfect Unanimity* in Madras,[15] and at his initiation, declared that he considered the title of an English Mason "'at once a cement to the friendship between your nation and me and confirms me the friend of mankind.'"[16] Since the 1740s Arcot had been in a subsidiary alliance with the East India Company, so it is possible that the future Nawab also foresaw some political ramifications in becoming a Freemason. In a letter to the Grand Master of England in 1778, Umdat ul-Umara wrote:

> An early knowledge and participation of the benefits arising to our house from its intimate union of councils and interests with the British nation and a deep veneration for the laws, constitutions and manners of the latter, have for many years of my life led me to seize every opportunity of drawing the ties subsisting between us closer and closer.
>
> By the accounts which have reached me of the principles and practices of your Fraternity, nothing can be more pleasing to the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, who we all, though in different ways[,] adore, or more honourable to His creatures, for they stand upon the broad basis of indiscriminate and universal benevolence.
>
> Under this conviction I have long wished to be admitted of your Fraternity; and now that I am initiated, I consider the title of an English Mason as one of the most honourable I possess, for it is at once a cement of friendship between your nation and me and confirms me the friend of mankind....

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[14] In a clarification to most Masonic authors, Umdat-ul-Umara was still heir to the throne of Nawab Mahomed Ali at the time of his initiation. See Pratap Chandra Chunder, *The Sons of Mystery: A Masonic Miscellany From Old Calcutta* (Calcutta: Jayanti, 1973), 17.

[15] The Provincial Grand Lodge of Madras was formed in 1752, although it is unknown how it came into being. It had its first Provincial Grand Master, Capt. Edmund Pascal, in 1767. See G.S. Gupta, comp., *Freemasonic Movement in India* (New Delhi: Indian Masonic Publications, 1981), Ch. 1, 9.

[16] Umdat ul-Umara, Nawab of Arcot, to the Duke of Manchester, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, dated September 29, 1778; quoted in Dudley Wright, rev., *Gould's History of Freemasonry Throughout the World*, vol. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 216.

> I shall avail myself of a proper opportunity to convince your Grace and the rest of the Brethren that Omdat-ul-Omrah is not an unfeeling Brother, or heedless of the precepts he has imbibed....[17]

The Nawab's words reveal a sincere attraction for the teachings of the Craft, an admiration for the British legal and constitutional system, and a desire to cement ties between Britain and Arcot—a political end he believed Freemasonry could accomplish. It should be remembered that despite Arcot's subordinate relationship to the East India Company, it was Nawab Mahomed Ali (Umdat's father)—not a Briton—whom King George III asked in 1770, when he wished to invest two Britons in India with the title of "Knight Commander of the Bath," to "'represent Our Person upon this solemn occasion, and that you will perform these Functions for Us which We always perform Ourselves when the circumstances will admit.'"[18] The ritual parity which this act created between the King of England and the Nawab must have given rise to expectations at the court of Arcot that the Nawab might gain some political leverage in his dealings with the East India Company. Any such hopes were to be dashed, however. In describing the apodictic selfishness and avarice of the English people, the Indo-Persian traveler, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, writing between 1799 and 1804, specifically cites the treatment of Umdat-ul-Umara as evidence:

> It is well known, that when Lord H_____t[19] was Governor of Madras, he wanted to interfere in the internal management of the revenues of the Carnatic, and for this purpose solicited the sanction of his superior, Sir J. S____e.[20] In this, however, he was disappointed, for the Governor-general would not acquiesce in the measure; saying, "Although it might be politic, it would be unjust, and an infraction of the treaty between the Nabob and the East-India Company." To this

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Letter from King George III to the Nawab of Arcot, dated June 27, 1770, quoted in Terence Creagh Coen, *The Indian Political Service, a Study in Indirect Rule* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), 71.

[19] I.e., Baron Robert Hobart, 4th Earl of Buckinghamshire; appointed Governor of Madras, 1793. See B.B. Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 34.

[20] I.e., Sir John Shore, 1st Baron Teignmouth; Governor-General, 1793-98. "John Shore... found it difficult to control Lord Hobart who was in the habit of ordering about the naval squadrom withut any reference to the Governor-General in Council. Hobart's differences with Shore finally became so serious that the former went home...."—Ibid., 40. Hobart was later President of the Board of Control, from 1812 to 1816.

> observation his lordship replied; that, "If ever, in any former instance, the English had manifested this spirit of forbearance in aggrandizing themselves, he should not have proposed the measure to his Excellency; but as it was evident to all the world that the contrary system had ever been pursued, he thought, to let the present opportunity pass by, would be little less than an act of folly."[21]

Company servants had for some time acted as creditors to the Arcot court and often pursued their own interests ahead of the Company's. In the 1770s, they comprised a faction led by a Paul Benfield, and wielded such power in the Madras Council that, in 1776 (only a year after Umdat's initiation), they successfully deposed and imprisoned the Governor, Lord Pigot, "who had tried to put an end to corruption there."[22] The Governor languished and eventually died in prison. The Pigot affair created such severe factionalism in the ranks of Madras Freemasonry that the Provincial Grand Lodge ceased functioning for some years. Writing in 1784, Brigadier-General Matthew Horne, now the Provincial Grand Master of the "Moderns,"[23] mentions

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[21] Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803. Written by Himself, in the Persian Language*, vol. 2; trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), 44.

[22] Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India* (Calcutta: Rupa and Co., 1993), 232.

[23] In the first half of the 18th century, a serious schism arose within the ranks of British Masonry, leading to a new set of lodges being formed under a rival Grand Lodge by 1751: the Atholl Grand Lodge. These Masons were known as the "Antients." The original Grand Lodge, made up of those Masons who styled themselves "Moderns," represented those with deistic leanings who preferred the 1723 edition of Anderson's *Constitutions*. The "Antients" represented more orthodox Christians Masons, who looked to the 1738 edition of the *Constitutions* and were obliged to obey Christian precepts regardless of where they lived, whereas the "Moderns" were allowed to live by the prevailing religious beliefs and customs of their homelands. Nevertheless, according to Neil York, disagreements were more between individuals or class-based, rather than over key principles, with the Antients representing more a middle class resentful of the domination of the London-based Grand Lodge. The rift was not mended in England until 1813 (when the United Grand Lodge of England was formed), and, in the meantime, had spread to the colonies, where it was a potent cause of disunity in the ranks of Freemasonry. See Neil L. York, "Freemasons and the American Revolution," *Historian*, vol. 55, no. 2 (Winter, 1993): 315-331. Not only did the "Ancients" resent the dropping of various Christian forms, but it is possible, too, "that the Jacobite Party was associated with the 'Ancients,' for certainly the 'Moderns,' by electing the Prince of Wales as their Grand Master, had identified itself with the Hanoverians"—J.S.M. Ward, *An Outline of Freemasonry* (London: The Baskerville Press, 1924), 69. The reconciliation of 1813, interestingly, was carried out by two royal brothers. In that year, the Duke of Sussex—Prince Augustus Frederick (1773-1843), sixth son of George III—succeeded his brother, the Prince of Wales (and future George IV), as Grand Master of the "Moderns." In the same year, the Duke of Atholl stepped down as head of the schismatic "Atholl" Masons in favor of the Duke of Kent—George IV's and the Duke of Sussex's brother (*and* Victoria's father). Together, the royal brothers, Kent and Sussex, immediately brought unity to the "Atholls" and the "Moderns" by forming the United Grand Lodge of England in December, 1813, thus healing this serious rift in English Freemasonry—see A.E. Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, combined edition (two volumes in one), vol. 2 (New York: Wing Books, 1970; 1920), 77-78.

> the unfortunate Divisions that arose and continued some years in the Settlement, occasioned by the Removal of Lord Pigot from the Government of Madras; and many of our Members becoming warm Adherents of different Parties, their animosity against each other ran so high, that they could not meet as Brethren; and not choosing to exclude either Party, our Lodge ceased.[24]

Constant harassment by the Madras Government in favor of his often unscrupulous English creditors may explain why Umdat-ul-Umara evinced a "scarcely contained Anglophobia,"[25] (ironic, considering his many English "brothers"!) and why, in 1799, during the Company's war with Mysore, he (in his capacity as Nawab) allegedly carried on a correspondence with Tipu Sultan. This led to his ouster by the Company, and provided the justification it needed to annex Arcot.

Umdat-ul-Umara's initiation most likely represents a desire by certain Masons in Madras to gain some prestige by having the future Nawab in their faction's ranks. Some Masonic sources mention that the Grand Lodge in London even went so far as to send him "'a Masonic apron, elegantly decorated, and a *Book of Constitutions* [i.e., Anderson's *Constitutions*] bound in a most superb manner'" at a cost of £37.17.6.[26] These items were conveyed to him in person by Sir John Day, Advocate-General of Bengal, which shows the importance Indian Masonry in general attached to Umdat-ul-Umara's initiation. However, as with his political life, Umdat-ul-Umara's Masonic life fell under a cloud. The minutes of *Perfect Unanimity* make a number of references to his "unmasonic" conduct, for example: "'Experience has shown that the solemn obligations of a Mason, and the admonitions of the Lodge, have weighed little with His Highness, in the payment of a just debt to the orphans of a faithful Brother and Servant.'"[27]

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[24] Quoted in G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India: A Study in Resolved Discords" (Prestonian Lecture for 1979), *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076), vol. 92 (1979): 174.

[25] C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire (The New Cambridge History of India,* II, 1), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 60. See also pg. 94.

[26] G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 176. (Walker's note: £37.17.6 amounted to over £500 in 1979.)

[27] In ibid.: 176.

Presumably, the outstanding debt was owed to one of the group of British creditors of the Arcot court, and one wonders which faction of Masons might have written this report.

The next Indian to be made a Mason was another Muslim, Meer Bundeh Ali Khan, in 1812, in an Atholl Lodge which met in Calcutta—*Marine* Lodge, No. 232, E.C.[28] The minutes of his initiation amply demonstrate the on-going debate between Masons over the religious nature and orientation of Freemasonry, and also the greater emphasis on Christian identity typical of many Atholl/Antient Masons:

> *Monday, 23rd March* 1812
> Lodge of Emergency[29] - at 8 P.M. Opened the Lodge on the 1st Degree Officers protempore proceeded to Initiate Meer Bundeh Ali Khan, And He received the 1st Degree of Masonry - Brs McCoy and Smith Secty would not be present saying that they were obligated not to be present at the Initiation of a Turk Jew or Infidel, And they considered all Mahomedans, Turks. Brs Hardie & Wilkins withdrew because they considered him as professing no Religion from his eating at Table with Europeans[.] But their Objections being ridiculous in the extreme and proceeding from extreme ignorance they were permitted to withdraw, but while the Lodge was Engaged in what was serious and Solemn these Brethren were most unworthily and unmasonically employing themselves in ridiculing the Mahomedan Religion, and so near the Lodge room that they were made to leave the place - A Most impressive & Solemn charge setting forth the principles of Free Masonry and the Duties of a Good Mason was delivered on the Occasion By the Worshipful Master in the Chair (Bro. Tucker)[.] After which the W.M. & all the Brethren present most cordially congratulated Br. Meer Bundeh Ali, on becoming one of our Brethren - and He in return most Sincerely thanked in such terms as language can scarcely express - At 10 P.M. Closed the Lodge.[30]

The charge that an Indian who ate with Europeans "broke caste" and therefore ceased belonging to or believing in any religion—presumably becoming, in the words of Anderson's *Constitutions*, a "stupid Atheist"—would turn out to have great staying power in years to come, and would form part of the ideological arsenal of those who opposed opening Freemasonry's doors to Indians. At the same time, if an Indian refused to eat with Europeans, he could be accused of violating the principle of brotherhood, which was one of the great "Landmarks" of Freemasonry. The issue of commensality, or interdining,

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[28] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 1, 7.

[29] This means an "Emergent Meeting"—a lodge meeting other than a regularly scheduled meeting.

[30] Quoted in G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 177.

was a highly charged subject for Freemasons, and it fed off of ritual pollution ideas which various Indian communities had, as we shall see.

Six months later, on September 1, 1812, in an attempt to head off fellow lodge members who had written the Atholl Grand Lodge in England, the Master, Wardens, and Secretary of *Marine* Lodge wrote their own letter to the Atholl Grand Lodge in London, pointing out the support for their action given them by other lodges and Masons:

> It is with sorrow that we have to state that three or four Ignorant Bros. have from their Malice and Ignorance, and not being able to appreciate the Meaning of what a Mason ought to be, have been of great Injury to the Lodge, by their having opposed the Making of Br. Meer Bundeh Ali Khan a man Universally respected, for the confirmation of which, We beg to refer you to the Marquis Wellesley,[31] and we are further sorry to say that these Brethren have had the address, to head away Several Bigoted, though otherwise very Worthy Members who were absent, to their opinion, and we have been informed that these Members have written to England to the Grand Lodge on the Subject and we have great reason to think that they have put many Signatures to their letter that have never been Authorised.... What we have done has met with the good wishes and Sanction of Lodge No. 1 Bengall and a Number of the better Informed Brethren of Lodge No. 317 as well as many other very worthy Brethren who have done us the Honor of Visiting us, coming from all quarters of the globe . . .[32]

After Meer Bundeh Ali Khan, it would be another twenty-two years—1834—before the next Indian would be initiated (as far as we can know with certainty). This was Mahomed Ibrahim Purkar, another Muslim, who "saw the light" in the *Lodge of Hope* in Ahmednagar.[33] He was followed in 1836 by Mahomed Ismael Khan, the Ambassador from Awadh, who was initiated in the Lodge of *Friendship*, No. 6, in London,[34] and

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[31] I.e., Richard Colley Wellesley, Earl of Mornington and later Marquis of Wellesley (1760-1842). He was Governor-General of India (1798-1805), and a Mason. See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 756-759.

[32] In G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 177.

[33] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 1, 13. Regarding the *Lodge of Hope*, see K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* (n.p., 1961?), 4: "In 1825 the civilian element of *Orion in the west*, presumably aided by the military members, seceded to form the *Lodge of Hope*, No. 802, [E.C.] also at Poona. Later it shifted to Ahmednagar and thence to Aurangabad, being finally erased in 1862." There is also a Lodge *Hope*, No. 413, E.C., founded 1833 listed as being in Meerut in 1864, according to *MRWI*, vol. 1, no.2 (May 1864), pg. 43, but this is not as likely a candidate as the former.

[34] *Bombay Gazette*, Jan. 20, 1840, "Letter to the Editor," in A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), pp. 16-18.

"immediately invested, by the Duke of Sussex himself, as a Past Senior Grand Warden."[35] Such an immediate conferring of so exalted a position in the Grand Lodge indicates the Duke of Sussex's determination to turn Freemasonry into a truly universal brotherhood.

Although the Grand Lodge of England has no record of it,[36] it seems likely that Ghazi-ud-Din Haydar, king of Awadh from 1814 to 1827,[37] was initiated by Lord Moira, the Governor-General of India from 1813 to 1823.[38] Lack of a record at the Grand Lodge, however, does not disprove that the initiation took place: in the *Short History of Lodge Anchor and Hope* (of Calcutta), contained in that lodge's 1963 book of by-laws, there is a statement that between 1815 and 1829, a serious disruption had taken place in the ranks of Freemasonry in Calcutta, resulting in the cessation of all communications with the Grand Lodge of England (more likely, a prolongued lack of communication on

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Finan believed this letter, signed "A Past Master," to have been penned by Dr. James Burnes, then Provincial Grand Master of Scottish Freemasonry in Western India. G.E. Walker states that this initiation occurred in 1836, but "A Past Master" claims that this ambassador "of the present Prince" of Awadh was initiated in 1837. He would have been attached to the Court of Nasir-ud-Din Haydar (r. 1827-37), although by Burnes' time (1840), Muhammad Ali Shah ruled Awadh.

[35] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 1, 7. In 1811, the Duke of Sussex, Prince Augustus Frederick (1773-1843), the sixth son of George III, succeeded his brother, the Prince of Wales, as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England when the latter assumed the Regency; see editor's note in Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, *A Persian at the Court of King George: the journal of Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, 1809-10*, trans. and ed. Margaret Morris Cloake (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1988), 265n. "The Duke was a Christian but had a great sympathy for the Jewish race and its culture, being himself a keen student of Hebrew. It was his strongly-held view that Freemasonry should be open to men of any faith who professed a belief in a Supreme Being, and he was determined that all Christian references should be deleted from the masonic ritual. Although this was contentious, and was frowned upon by some, it had been speedily effected by a committee and put into practice in the English Constitution (though some Christian references did, and still do, remain)"—Richard Sandbach, "Introduction," in George Oliver *The Book of the Lodge*, 3rd ed. (Wellingborough, Northhampshire, England: Aquarian Press, 1986; first publ. in 1864), xiv-xv.

[36] G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 177. See also A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 16, where "A Past Master" (presumably Dr. James Burnes) in a Letter to the Editor of the *Bombay Gazette* (Jan. 20, 1840), states: "One of the late Kings of Oudh became a Mason under the auspices, I believe, of the Marquis of Hastings, one of the most accomplished and learned Brethren that ever existed."

[37] For more on Ghazi-ud-Din Haydar, see D. P. Sinha, *British Relations With Oudh: A Case Study* (Calcutta: K. P. Baghchi and Company, 1983), 39-40.

[38] General Francis Rowden-Hastings (1754-1826), 2nd Earl of Moira and, later, 1st Marquis of Hastings. See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 805. Lord Moira was appointed Acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England under the Duke of Cumberland in 1790, and again, under the Prince of Wales, 1806. See A.E. Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, 71 and 75.

the part of Grand Lodge led to resentment and talk of secession on the part of Bengal's lodges at this time).[39] That Ghazi-ud-Din represented the kind of enlightened monarch Masons would have been anxious to enlist in their ranks is indicated by the fact that "although the Asiatic Society of Bengal admitted Indians as members only in 1829, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain had, in its first year [i.e, 1823], conferred honorary membership on two Indians, the Raja of Tanjore and the King of Awadh."[40]

In 1838, the very same Lodge No. 317—*Humility with Fortitude*[41]—which had supported *Marine* Lodge's initiation of Meer Bundeh Ali Khan, would refuse to admit as visitors the next two Indians (both Muslims) initiated by *Marine*, "'alleging that the Grand Lodge does not recognize their admission.'" *Marine* wrote to Grand Lodge in England requesting clarification, and received the first in a series of official pronouncements by the Grand Lodge of England stating that "'the Grand Lo: of England and the Craft at large acting under its authority *admit of no distinction on the score of Religion or Creed.*'"[42] Vindicated by this answer, *Marine* Lodge proceeded to initiate yet another Muslim, this time an Arab merchant from Muscat, in 1839.

A year later, Dr. John Grant became Provincial Grand Master for the English Constitution lodges of Bengal (there were no permanent lodges belonging to the Scottish or Irish Constitutions in Bengal at this time). In 1840, he and the Provincial Grand Lodge separately sent letters to the Duke of Sussex, Grand Master, for a ruling on the admission of Hindus. Writing on behalf of the Duke on July 2, 1842, the Grand Secretary was again unequivocal in dealing with the initiation of both Hindus and Muslims into Freemasonry:

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39 See G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 1, 7. Some doubt attaches to this assertion, at least for the years 1819 to 1824, given both contemporary records and Lord Moira's Masonic activities, however, it may be valid for the period 1814 (when Ghazi-ud-Din Haydar ascended the throne) to 1819—see P.C. Chunder, *The Sons of Mystery*, 28.

40 *Proceedings of the Meetings of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 26 April 1823; 13 Feb. 1824; 27 Feb. 1824; 9 April 1824—see O.P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past, 1784-1838* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 153.

41 After the union of the Atholl/Antient and Modern Grand Lodges back in England this lodge would have the number 229. See also *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May 1864): 43.

42 Quoted in G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 177 (my italics).

> With reference to the application of the P.G.L. of Bengal to the G.L. of England relative to the initiation of Hindoos,... He is more positive on this point, as the question is one which has occupied his attention for many years, and formed a part of his Masonic creed, that, provided a man believe in the existence of the Grand Architect of the Universe, in futurity, and extends that belief likewise to a state of rewards and punishments hereafter, such a person is fully competent to be received as a Brother. Previously, however, to swearing any man to secrecy, it is necessary to ascertain what religion he professes, in order to obligate him in the most formal and solemn manner possible; but when once admitted into the Fraternity, all questions of religion cease, because, by the rules of our Order, matters of religion and of State policy are strictly prohibited from forming any part of discussion in a well regulated Lodge. Upon this principle, *Hindoos, as well as Mahomedans, can and ought to be received.*[43]

In order to prove that this was not an innovation, the letter invokes the long-standing policy of the Duke of Sussex, as well as the practices and interpretive tradition of previous Grand Masters:

> The Grand Master himself was present at the initiation of Mirza Abul [Hassan Khan, Persian Ambassador to England], who was made by the late Marquis of Hastings [i.e., Lord Moira]. Three of the Persian Princes were made about six years since, as likewise the Moolavee under the King of Oude. And about the year 1776, Omdit Ul Omrah Bahandra, eldest son of the Nabob of Arcot, was initiated in India, and received from the Grand Lodge a blue apron; thus proving that the predecessors of the present Grand Master entertained notions similar to his own upon this point.[44]

The Duke, through the Grand Secretary, reveals his purpose in wanting to spread Freemasonry among the population of India, and rejects all arguments or interpretations meant to circumvent these ends:

> It is no doubt a great object to impress brotherly and friendly feelings between the Europeans and enlightened Hindoos, and no means can be so effectual as those employed by the Craft in promoting all noble, useful, and charitable purposes. Referring to the letter of the R.W. Prov. Grand Master addressed to the Grand Secretary, under date the 15th April 1840, it appears that the general principle is admitted, but the indiscriminate admission of Mahomedans and Hindoos is objected to. The indiscriminate admission into the Order of any class or denomination of persons cannot fail to operate injuriously, and to bring discredit

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[43] In *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 5, no. 10 (January 1868): 366-68 (my italics). This letter was contributed to the editor, George Bease, by William Hoff, editor of the *Indian Freemasons' Friend*, based in Calcutta.

[44] Ibid.

> upon the Craft; but this observation applies with equal force to the Christian portion of the world as to any other. The whole tenor of our laws, as well as of the Ancient Charges, is to guard against the initiation of individuals whose conduct, character, or education would not reflect credit on Masonry, and it is greatly to be regretted that these Regulations are not sufficiently attended to.[45]

Prior to receiving the reply, however, John Grant, together with the rest of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal, drew up a By-Law (no. 55) which stipulated that any daughter (i.e., local) lodge wanting to initiate an "Asiatic" into Freemasonry would first have to get a special dispensation from the Provincial Grand Master. This was in principle unconstitutional, as it usurped the right of a local lodge to decide whom to admit or reject. However, since none of the lodges of Bengal complained at the time, and as the prejudice against Indians was sufficiently great, when the letter from Grand Lodge finally did arrive there appears to have already developed a consensus in Bengal not to trouble Grand Lodge by letting it know what the Provincial Grand Lodge had done. Indeed, only after twenty-two years would Grand Lodge actually find out what was in the By-Laws of the P.G.L. of Bengal. Indians would get into the ranks of Masonry a few times more in Bengal over the next three decades, but the Duke of Sussex's dream—and Grand Lodge's policy—had now been formally and procedurally suppressed, unbeknownst to the Grand Lodge. The momentum for admitting Indians into Freemasonry would now shift to Bombay, and to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India, operating under a warrant from the Grand Lodge of Scotland.[46]

II. BOMBAY AND INDIANS' GROWING INTEREST IN FREEMASONRY

Although Indians—mostly Muslim aristocrats and nobles—were being initiated into Freemasonry, the number was small, and the process idiosyncratic. Not until the mid-nineteenth century, in Bombay, was the first lodge founded expressly for systematically screening Indian applicants for admission into the Craft.

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[45] Ibid.

[46] In the early 1840s no English Constitution lodges operated in Bombay—a situation which was the reverse of Bengal.

There are conflicting reports as to when Indians in the Bombay area first took notice of Freemasonry. Most Masonic authors today look to the early 1840s, and also more contemporary Masons, such as George Bease, the editor of the *Masonic Record for Western India* in the mid-19th century, believed that the interest in Freemasonry among Bombay's Indian, especially Parsi, population began twenty-five years prior to his own time, which would have been around 1839/40. But "repeated applications failed to procure them [i.e., Parsis] admission in any of the Lodges of Bombay" due to great prejudice on the part of British Masons.[47]

In 1803, however, when the Muslim nobleman from Bengal, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, returned to India after an extended journey through Europe and the Middle East, he sojourned for a period in Bombay, where he frequently kept company with Aga Hussen, "the nephew of Hajy Kheleel, the unfortunate Persian Ambassador (who was killed during the affray between the Persians of his suite, and the Sepoys of his guard of honour)."[48] Hussen, a "sensible and genteel" young man, was staying in Bombay in anticipation of being appointed Ambassador in place of his murdered uncle, and, as a consequence, "received a liberal pecuniary allowance from the Company." Besides inviting Mirza Abu Taleb Khan to his many parties, Hussen "asked me a number of questions respecting Europe, and was *particularly anxious to learn the history of the Freemasons*."[49]

It is impossible to determine what sparked this intense curiosity concerning Freemasonry. The state of Masonry in Bombay at this time seems to have been weak. The Provincial Grand Master for Bombay (that is, for the English Constitution: there were no Scottish Constitution lodges at this time) from 1768 to 1799 was James Todd, but then a lacuna appears in the record until 1803, when an "Atholl warrant was granted

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[47] *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May 1864): 46.

[48] Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803. Written by Himself, in the Persian Language*, trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), vol. 2, 392.

[49] Ibid., 392-93 (italics mine).

to the 78th Foot which regiment took part in the decisive victory at Assaye" under Sir Arthur Wellesley in the Maratha War.[50] This lodge disappeared in 1828, but was "responsible for the growth of the Craft in Western India; for, on a recommendation from it, Lodge *Benevolent* was formed in Poona in 1822."[51] The influence of this military lodge appears to have extended only to Poona, not to Bombay. Undoubtedly, there were Masons in Bombay in this interim period, but the number appears to have been low (see below); otherwise, lodges would have formed. Perhaps, then, it was Mirza Abu Taleb Khan himself who informed Aga Hussen about the Freemasons of Europe, thus piquing the latter's curiosity.[52] Whether information on Freemasonry spread from Aga Hussen to any Indians of Bombay is also unclear.[53] In any case, it is the first evidence available of non-Europeans in Bombay discussing Freemasonry among themselves.

The earliest date for Bombay's *Indians* taking an interest in Freemasonry is given by Kharshedji R. Cama, prominent Mason and Parsi reformer and Orientalist, in a talk delivered in 1876. He states that the first public discussion about Freemasonry among Indians in Bombay occurred fifty-three years earlier (i.e., 1823, and exactly two decades after Aga Hussen learned about the Craft), when Furdunji Murzban—the editor of the *Bombay Samachar* (founded 1822), which was "the pioneer of the native press, the first vernacular paper that was ever established in Bombay—boldly opened its columns to the discussion of the subject, and freely, and without allowing... [himself] to be daunted by any fear of the invectives of the ignorant and the bigotted of its race, confessed to having an admiration for Freemasonry, and wrote of it in very approving and commendatory

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[50] K. Gopalswami and Dr. S. K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961*, 3. Arthur Wellesley later became the Duke of Wellington.

[51] Ibid.

[52] While in London in 1800, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan attended a Masonic garden party at which the Prince of Wales (the future George IV), the Grand Master, was present. He was invited to join the Craft but declined, unsure as to whether Freemasonry (which he describes) compromised his Shi'a faith; however, he mentions that two Turkish diplomats at the party accepted to become Masons. See Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan*, vol. 1, 190-94.

[53] Although it is intriguing to find that there was a Persian element in Bombay Freemasonry from the moment that Natives were allowed to be initiated, some years later.

terms."[54] Furdunji, "a highly respected and learned Parsee gentleman," says Cama, even expressed his desire to become a Freemason. However, at that time,

> there was not a single Masonic Lodge in existence in Bombay, nor were there the requisite seven Masons to get up one, to confer the degree on the aspirant, as can be gathered from the reply the editor received from a European Mason, a friend of his, to the effect that there were scarcely to be found more than three Freemasons then in the island. The editor expressed himself much disappointed at this unfortunate circumstance, allowed his ardour to cool down for want of means of satisfy it, and died without succeeding in having his wishes gratified, to see the light for which he was so much and so long anxiously awaiting.[55]

What is remarkable is that despite the presence of only three Masons in Bombay the subject of Freemasonry had become important enough to discuss in the vernacular press as early as 1823. Again, one wonders where news of Freemasonry was coming from and where Murzban himself first learned of it. Perhaps it was from his "European Mason" friend whose identity Cama does not give. It is possible that this European was none other than Dr. James Burnes, who arrived in Bombay in 1821 as a medical officer for the East India Company, and who, in the late 1830s, revived the fortunes of Freemasonry in western India as Provincial Grand Master under the Scottish Constitution (see below).

K. R. Cama corroborates his claim by referring to a relative, Cursetji Nusserwanji Cama (1815-1885), who had interested himself since his "boyish days" in the controversies surrounding Freemasonry in the Parsi community,

> indicating how early he was predisposed to take part in any inquiries of the kind that were set on foot, and had copied them out himself from the newspapers. I came to know of these discussions of an age anterior to my birth [1831] through reading his manuscript copy, and felt so delighted to learn therefrom that there existed an earnest advocate of our Order in the Zoroastrian community [i.e., Furdoonjee Murzban, editor of the *Bombay Samachar*] more than fifty years ago that I caused the old controversies to be printed in a collected form in a pamphlet in the year 1862.[56]

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[54] Kharshedji Rustomji Cama, "A Discourse on Zoroastrians and Freemasonry," (delivered at the Freemasons' Jamshedi Naoroz Festival, held at the Masonic Hall, Baboola Tank Road, on Wednesday, the 22nd of March 1876) (Bombay: Printed at the Times of India Steam Press, 1876), 2.

[55] Ibid., 2.

[56] Ibid., 3.

C.N. Cama was an important member of the Cama family—one of the *shetia* families most closely associated with the China trade—and he "became one of the most successful merchants trading between India and China, having founded his own firm in 1838, and built two ships."[57] However, in 1823 he would have been only seven years old, which is too early to be taking an interest in the *Bombay Samachar* controversies. Yet, K.R. Cama states that the controversies took place "anterior" to his own birth in 1831, by which time C.N. Cama would have been sixteen years old, which is a more plausible age for him to have been following newspaper discussions. This suggests an ongoing, or at least recurrent, discussion of Freemasonry in the Parsi community. In any case, C.N. Cama was clearly interested in, and predisposed to, Freemasonry long before his actual initiation in 1857, at the age of forty-two.[58]

From this it seems clear that Parsis were well-aware of, and intrigued by, Freemasonry long before the 1840/41 period commonly accepted today by most Indian Masons for the large-scale awareness of Freemasonry among the "native" population of Bombay. Thus, by the time the Parsi, Maneckji Cursetji (see below), pushed to get the doors of Freemasonry opened to Indians in the early 1840s, he was actually culminating—not commencing—a process which had been developing in the Parsi community (and among some Muslims) for at least one decade, and more likely two.

A final note on Furdunji Murzban: although he never "saw the light" of Freemasonry himself, his son, Maneckji Cowasji Murzban (b. 1839), *was* initiated in 1863, and remained an active and prominent Mason for the remainder of his life.[59]

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[57] Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885* (Oxford University Press, 1972), 11.

[58] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342, S.C.* (Bombay: printed at the British India Press, 1912), 178. No doubt his delay in becoming initiated was connected with these same controversies surrounding Freemasonry, and he must have been subjected to intense pressure not to join—either from family members, or from Parsi religious leaders, or both. In 1865, C. N. Cama would be elected Provisional Grand Treasurer for the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (S.C.). See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 79.

[59] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 141. He was Master of the lodge in 1868—see ibid., 161.

Murzban was an architect by profession, and became a well-respected designer and construction supervisor for the Public Works Department of Bombay, rising to become the executive engineer of the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1892.[60]

About the same time that Dr. John Grant took over the reins of Masonic government for the Provincial Grand Lodge of the English Constitution lodges in Bengal and effectively halted the admission of Indians there,[61] Dr. James Burnes assumed the leadership of the Scottish Constitution lodges in western India and was to play a pivotal part in bringing Indians into Freemasonry. Burnes arrived in Bombay in October, 1821 as a medical officer in the East India Company's service (taken on the strength of the Bombay Army. His younger brother by four years, Alexander Burnes, was taken as a cadet, and is well-known for his exploits and death in Afghanistan).[62] He was appointed Provincial Grand Master over the Provinces of Western India and its Dependencies in 1837, during a return trip to Edinburgh. Burnes' titles and honors seem to have lent considerable prestige to Freemasonry among the elites of Bombay after his return to India that same year. The first Provincial Grand Lodge under the Scottish banner was established in Bombay on January 1, 1838.

Beginning in 1840, the year Bengal enacted its By-Law 55, the non-Masonic press in both Calcutta and Bombay began to discuss seriously the admissibility of Indians to

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60 See Norma Evenson, *The Indian Metropolis: A View Toward the West* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 76-77.

61 Dr. James Burnes, K.H., L.L.D. (1801-62), was the last Knight of the Guelphic Order of Hanover to be made by King William IV. The two met during a return trip Burnes made to Britain in 1834, when he was presented at Court by his friend, the Earl of Dalhousie, Grand Master of Scotland in 1804-05, who had returned from commanding the Indian Army (this is not the same as Governor-General Dalhousie, who was born in 1812). On this trip, too, Burnes was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, a notorious stronghold of Freemasons, and was created a Doctor of Law by the University of Glasgow. Although initiated in August 1834 in Lodge *St. Peter*, in Montrose, under the Scottish Constitution, he was Master, in 1839 and 1840, of the only Lodge in Bombay at that time—the then English Constitution Lodge *Perseverance*. This lodge later switched to the Scottish Constitution due to its attachment to Burnes. See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 1 and 4; and G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 176.

62 Alexander Burnes was Provincial Grand Senior Warden for the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India when it was founded in January, 1838. Brother Charles Burnes, who also died at Kabul with Alexander, was Provincial Grand Registrar—see A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 1-2.

Freemasonry. In a reference to the previous issue of his journal, the editor of the *Bombay Gazette* in January 1840 mentions having given an account of the initiation of Muslims, and speaks of a query from "our Calcutta contemporary," the *Courier*, as to whether such a step "was in accordance with the principles of the Craft or not."[63] He goes on to print a letter to the editor written by "A Past Master," who is most likely James Burnes.[64] "A Past Master" writes:

> Mr. Editor, I had thought that no one who had perused what you were pleased to style the eloquent and elegant address of the Rt. Wor. Bro. Burnes to the Craft on St. John's Day, or who has marked the great and universal principles of right (to use your expression) therein inculcated, could have remained under the impression that Freemasonry, instead of being a general system for the good of all religions, that have any sense in them, to join together in works of benevolence and charity, was to be restricted in its application to a particular sect or creed. It appears, however, from your remarks in the last issue of your paper, that even you require to be enlightened on this subject, and as I doubt not that most of your native readers are in the same predicament, I shall begin by explaining that Freemasonry is an institution which welcomes equally to its bosom the Jew, and the Gentile, the Christian and the Mahomedan, requiring from each only a brief [*sic*; belief?] in a Divine Being, with a just sense of moral rectitude and conscientious obligation.[65]

Having established the principle, Burnes—no doubt in an attempt to reach out to the *Gazette's* "native readers"—shows how the Masonic system is universally practiced in one form or another. He speaks of various Muslim nobles who have been initiated (see above),[66] and then makes a reference to his brother: "Members of the Fraternity who read with attention the Travels of Bro. Sir Alexander Burnes into Bokhara will recognize something very like Masonry in his meetings with certain Mahomedan Chiefs." As for Hindus, "I have never heard of a Hindu being received into Masonry, although the

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[63] *Bombay Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1840; full article in A. Finan, 15-18.

[64] Finan definitely believes "A Past Master" to have been Burnes (see Finan, 19), and a reference by "A Past Master" to Alexander Burnes' travels in Central Asia also gives added weight to this conclusion.

[65] *Bombay Gazette*, January 27, 1840. See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 16-17.

[66] Burnes, too, says that one "of the late Kings of Oudh became a Mason under the auspices, I believe, of the Marquis of Hastings...," lending added support to the probability that Ghazi-ud-Din Haydar was a Mason.

learned Archdeacon Robinson traced a connection between Masonry and the Brahminical ceremonies;" nor does he know of any Parsi having been admitted into a British lodge, but makes reference to a recently deceased Parsi who was granted the degree of a Masonic Master by a French lodge in Mauritius. This, he says, "has formed the ground of an application from a gentleman of the same persuasion in Bombay, to be ballotted for as a candidate in Lodge Perseverance."

On January 3, 1843, Freemasonry in Bombay received a significant public relations boost when the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India performed the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital. The Masonic ritual was a spectacle the like of which had never been witnessed in Bombay. Most of Bombay's higher officialdom and many non-official Britons turned out for the occasion, as well as "an immense assemblage of every class and denomination."[67] According to the *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* (which was partly owned by Jeejeebhoy[68]), the insignia and clothing of the Masons

> excited much admiration, above forty members of the Prov. Grand Lodge being dressed alike in green aprons and scarves with gold embroidery. The banner, baton, staves &c. were also in admirable taste and three gilt pillars, of the Corinthian, Ionic, and Doric, orders, which were placed beside the Grand Master and his Wardens gave a very striking effect to the ceremony, which, on this, the first occasion of Masonic display in our city, passed off with great éclat.[69]

Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy (1783-1859), an erstwhile China trader turned philanthropist (indeed, he was famous throughout the empire for his munificence), was the first Indian ever to be knighted by the British (in 1842). That Jeejeebhoy chose to consecrate his new hospital with a Masonic ceremony was of great import, and James Burnes in his speech on that occasion wanted to let Jeejeebhoy and the other Indians present know that the whole Masonic world would be thrilled at the honor he had given it:

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[67] *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, Jan. 4, 1843: 4.

[68] See Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, 23.

[69] *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, Jan. 4, 1843: 4.

> And when the record of these proceedings shall be read within the houses of our Order, dispersed throughout the civilized world, our Brethren also, of every tongue and nation, will rejoice that we have been aiding you in this good work; and will participate with us in exultation that by far the foremost man for deeds of true wisdom in this portion of the globe has also, in giving effect to munificent designs of love and charity, been the first of his tribe and country to solicit the countenance of our Brotherhood.[70]

Of course, Furdunji Murzban preceded Jeejeebhoy by many years in "soliciting the countenance" of the Masons, but that must have been scarcely remembered by 1843, or if it was remembered, probably involved controversies with the Parsis that Burnes did not want re-opened. Indeed, Burnes seemed quite anxious in his talk to reach out to the Parsis, starting with Jeejeebhoy, who, although not a Mason, was described by Burnes as being one in essence: "You are a wise master Builder, a living stone, square, polished, fashioned, and proved by the hand of the Great Master himself, that your patent is from the Grand Chancery on high,—and that you need neither sign nor token, warrant nor diploma, password nor grip, to ensure you a welcome to the heart of every honest mason."[71] Describing the symbolic meaning of the implements and actions that had just been observed in the ritual, Burnes announced to Jeejeebhoy:

> They are, in truth, tokens of a great and practical system of universal good-will and benevolence,—which, establishing a moral worth as a standard, welcomes to its bosom the good of every colour, clime, or creed that acknowledges God,—which binds you, whose name and deeds fill men's mouths, as those of the Benevolent Parsee of Bombay, and... myself, the child of Northern Europe and all who are willing to work with us to mitigate the human woe, into one vast chain of fraternity and love....
>
> "God hath made mankind one mighty brotherhood.
> Himself their Master, and the World their Lodge."[72]

Burnes then made a specific reference to the Parsi religion, linking it to ancient Masonry in what must have been a calculated attempt to induce the Parsis present to investigate the Craft:

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[70] In A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 33.

[71] Ibid., 35.

[72] Ibid, 34.

> ...from the earliest period the system I have described has been in operation, assuaging the horrors of strife, and encouraging the spread of civilisation; and while your remote forefathers were bowing with adoration to the glorious orb of the day,... our ancient Brethren, *if they were not identical with them*, were also, by symbols of the sun, the moon, and the starry firmament, inculcating the mighty truths of God's power, omnipresence, and divinity....[73]

If that were not sufficient, Burnes points out that many of "those eminent individuals, whose names are dearest to India, have been professors and promoters of this vast system," including high officials of Bombay, and the late Marquis of Hastings (Lord Moira), the erstwhile Governor-General. "We have lately seen," Burnes continues, "the Government of a sister Presidency transferred from one noble Brother to another, and if we cannot include amongst us the distinguished officer who presides at Bombay [i.e., Sir George Arthur, Baronet, and Governor of Bombay; he was present on the occasion], we have the satisfaction of seeing his son amongst our Office bearers."[74]

In 1845, a Bombay Mason writing to the editor of the London-based *Freemasons' Quarterly Review* under the name, "Frater" (probably Burnes, who seems to have enjoyed using a *nom de plume* when writing to the press), says that the Masonic ceremony for the Jeejeebhoy Hospital

> made a considerable impression upon the wondering natives, and nothing more so than by observing the high and wealthy of the presidency in such close communion with their more humble brethren; and constant and earnest were the after-enquiries respecting the mystic tie that could bind them so intimately together. To the inquiring mind the Craft have ever been ready and willing to explain to the uninitiated the grand principles upon which our Order is founded,... and the result was that many became eager for the privilege of wearing the badge of innocence, and to be received into the fraternity, some of whom were men of well-known talent, enterprise and honour.[75]

The early 1840s in Bombay were a time of intense ideological turmoil for the city's Parsis. Christian missionaries had begun a campaign of attacking Hinduism, Islam, and

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[73] Ibid., 35 (italics mine).

[74] Ibid, 34-35. Burnes appears to be referring to F. L. Arthur, who is listed in this article as a Provincial Grand Sword Bearer in the procession.

[75] *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, new series (London) (September 1845): 361-64. Also quoted in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 36.

Zoroastrianism. The attacks were aimed primarily at the students of the English-medium institutions, who, getting no help from their priests, were left to their own devices to defend their religions. The general ferment led to an outburst of Gujarati journalism by both Parsis and Hindus in defense of the essentials of their religion, even if not all their external practices.[76] It is not hard to imagine how the Jeejeebhoy Hospital ceremony, and Burnes' speech on that occasion must have played, especially given its validation of Parsi religion. The message the Parsis would have heard from Burnes was clear: your religion is closely akin to Freemasonry—indeed, the two may actually have been one tradition in the distant past—thus providing a living connection between Western spirituality and Zoroastrianism; and becoming a Mason will bring with it no stigma, but only honor, since the rulers of British India are either Masons themselves, or sympathizers. This was a speech calculated to allay the fears of the "natives," especially the Parsis among them, and to induce them to become candidates for initiation. As "Frater's" letter demonstrates, it left a powerful impression upon them.

III. MANECKJI CURSETJI AND THE BIRTH OF LODGE *RISING STAR*

The first Indian associated with opening the doors of Freemasonry to the natives of India was a Parsi, Maneckji Cursetji (Manekji Kharshedji, 1808-1887). Although commonly but incorrectly referred to in the annals of Indian Freemasonry as "the first Indian Mason," Maneckji, in partnership with the Provincial Grand Master of All-Scottish Freemasonry in India, James Burnes, nevertheless *was* responsible for inaugurating the systematic entry of Indians into Freemasonry, through the founding of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 342, S.C. (i.e., Scottish Constitution). The history of this lodge warrants close study, because it serves as a case study to introduce the larger themes of this thesis.

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[76] See James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism: Group Affiliations and the Politics of Public Associations in Nineteenth Century Western India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974), 33-34.

Son of Cursetji Maneckji Shroff and, in the 1830s, one of the proprietors of the *Bombay Gazette*,[77] Maneckji Cursetji was also an Assistant Collector, and a "dauntless" Vakil of the Sudder Adawlat court, where he had "frequent passages-at-arms with the Judges."[78] Abroad, Cursetji was the "friend and correspondent of the aristocracy of England and of Europe," and, indeed, was one of the first Indians to be "lionized in Europe about the middle of the last century."[79] In Bombay, Cursetji was known as an ardent advocate of female education, and was later chosen to serve in the Governor's Legislative Council during Richard Temple's administration, where he promoted that cause with zeal.[80] He was "warm-hearted, humorous and loquacious," but a "certain amount of assertiveness bordering occasionally on obstinacy invested his views and opinions with an unpleasant flavour at times."[81] Nevertheless, Cursetji was known for his "courageousness... and fearless independence in his public and private relations," and his "reputation for integrity and unselfishness was beyond question."[82] It was Cursetji whom Burnes had referred to in the *Bombay Gazette* article of January 1840 as the Parsi who had recently applied to a lodge for initiation. This lodge was *Perseverance*, an erstwhile English Constitution lodge which had since defected to the Scottish banner, and the only Masonic lodge then operating in Bombay City. Cursetji was rejected, however.[83] Clearly, though, this was not a man to take no for an answer from bigoted Europeans.

Since Cursetji was about to travel to England, his friends among the Masons in *Perseverance* encouraged him to seek initiation from the Duke of Sussex, Grand Master

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[77] Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, 23.
[78] H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, vol. 1 (Bombay: G. Claridge and Co., Ltd., 1939), 333.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Sir Richard Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India* (London: John Murray, 1882), 477. Cursetji was also the founder of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution in Bombay, and was one of the first Indians in Bombay to educate the women of his family.
[81] H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, 334.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Another account says that, upon hearing that he would be rejected, he withdrew his application before actually being rejected.

of the Masons of England and uncle to Queen Victoria. Upon reaching London, however, Cursetji found that the Duke was in Paris, so he proceeded there, but missed him once again. He finally decided to take initiation in a French lodge, *A La Gloire de l'Univers*, in or around 1842.[84] Cursetji returned to India, but refused to petition Lodge *Perseverance* to allow him to join, now that he was a fellow Mason, no doubt aware of what the outcome would be. Indeed, when some lodge members, on their own, proposed him as a joining member, he was again black-balled.[85] In December 1843, with the assistance of twenty-seven Europeans, mostly members of Lodge *Perseverance*,[86] Cursetji helped to found the first Masonic lodge in India specifically for initiating Indians into the Craft: Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*. Cursetji was the lodge's first Secretary, and James Burnes, the lodge's first Master.

In granting the petition to constitute the new lodge, Burnes wrote to one of the petitioners, P. W. LeGeyt, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and, in public life, the Chief Magistrate of Bombay:[87]

> I have been favoured with an address by you and twenty-six other worthy brethren pointing out the injustice as well as the inexpediency of longer continuing to debar from Masonic privileges native gentlemen who are of acknowledged respectability and character holding responsible offices under Government, and who can be well and worthily recommended by brethren as possessing a fear of God and a due sense of moral obligation....[88]

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[84] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 2.

[85] Under many lodge by-laws only one black ball in the balloting process can stop a new member from being admitted, since the whole lodge is supposed to accept a person unanimously, either as an initiate, or as a joining member from some other lodge. Theoretically, only one person in *Perseverance* need have been against Cursetji's joining, and there is no record of the number of white and black balls cast on that occasion.

[86] D.F. Wadia gives this number, saying that most were from *Perseverance*, but Finan says that thirty Masons signed the petition, with "no less than nineteen" being from *Perseverance*. See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 3, and A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 37.

[87] LeGeyt became the Chief Magistrate of Police at Bombay in 1840, and would go on to become a Puisne Judge, and then the Judicial Commissioner of the Southern Mahratta Country, with his headquarters at Poona. He would become Provincial Grand Master upon Burnes' departure from India in 1849. In March 1855, LeGeyt moved to Calcutta to take up a post as member of the Supreme Council of the Governor-General, and died there in 1860. See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 46, 74.

[88] In D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 7.

Of the founding members, three belonged to the East India Company's Civil Service, ten to its Military Service, one to the Royal Navy, five to the Company's Medical Service, two to the Bombay judiciary (both magistrates), and one was Deputy Postmaster General. The privately employed individuals included George Buist, editor of the *Bombay Times*, and W. W. Cargill, Managing Director of the Bank of Western India.[89] These men occupied important positions in the government and commercial life of the city—a fact which could not have been lost on both the native and European populations. In both sanctioning and governing this lodge, Burnes had indeed made a strong statement in support of the idea that Europeans and Indians could be brothers.

At its inception there was an understanding that *Rising Star* would alone be responsible for initiating Indians, while Lodge *Perseverance* was to initiate Europeans exclusively. This informal arrangement seems to have been established with the sanction of James Burnes himself (although it did undermine the constitutional authority of individual lodges to accept whomever they pleased), in part, no doubt, to allay fears on the part of *Perseverance* members that the new lodge would divert potential members away from *Perseverance*.[90] Indeed, when a European named Edward Trench was proposed for initiation in *Rising Star* in 1853, the Provincial Grand Lodge intervened, saying that the lodge was to initiate Natives only, and the proposal was withdrawn.[91] However, *Rising Star* continued to be free to accept Europeans who wished to join (i.e., from a Scottish Constitution lodge) or affiliate to (i.e., from an English Constitution lodge) the lodge. A year earlier, in 1852, when Lodge *Perseverance* contemplated initiating a "Native gentleman," the Master of *Rising Star* protested, saying that it was "contrary to the mutual understanding arrived at between the two lodges, when the lodge

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[89] See ibid., 6.

[90] When the Provincial Grand Master, James Burnes, granted a warrant for *Rising Star*—of which he was to be the first Master—the letter requesting him to grant a warrant stated that it was the intention of the brethren of *Rising Star* (at that time all Europeans except for one Parsi—Manekji Cursetji) "to initiate gentlemen natives of India only." See G.L.F. Connell on Lodge *Perseverance*, No. 351 (S.C.), in "History of Freemasonry in Western India" (serialized), in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 8 (November 1867): 299.

[91] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 89.

was founded expressly for the purpose of initiating Native candidates whose character Lodge Perseverance had not the same means of scrutinising so as to prevent the admission of unworthy men....”[92] A letter was promptly dashed off to *Perseverance* protesting the initiation, and the Provincial Grand Lodge was also asked to rule in the matter. However, D.F. Wadia says that *Rising Star's* minutes “do not contain any further allusion to the matter.” Given the P.G.L.'s ruling concerning Edward Trench a year later, it is likely that the policy was applied *mutatis mutandis* first to Lodge *Perseverance*.[93] However, this policy was effectively ended in 1885,[94] although it seems to have been poorly enforced for some time before that, especially outside Bombay City (see below).

At first *Rising Star* had mostly European members since there were as yet so few Indian “brothers.” The first two Indians initiated (in early 1844) were Ardeshir Cursetji Wadia, a member of the famous Wadia shipbuilding family and, at that time, Chief Engineer in the Government Dockyard,[95] and Mirza Ali Mahomed Shoostry, a Persian, and probably a native of Shustar, in Iran. Strangely, almost all of Lodge *Rising Star's* early initiates seem to have been Persian merchants, as well as one Nabob Akbar

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[92] Ibid., 86.

[93] For evidence of this, see letter from Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 342, to K.R. Cama, Secretary, Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India, dated October 22, 1866, Appendix M in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 397-99, especially 398, where it states that *Perseverance* and *Rising Star* have worked harmoniously in upholding the policy.

[94] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 148: on Nov. 1885, “[a]ttention having been drawn to the admission of certain native gentlemen into Lodge Perseverance, No. 351, the following recommendation of the Grand Standing Committee was adopted by Grand Lodge:— ‘That as Lodges intended specifically for natives exist, the utmost care should be exercised before the initiation of native candidates into Bombay Lodges confined principally or entirely of European brethren, and this recommendation applies equally to Lodges in the Presidency, and up country. With regard to Lodges in which native brethren predominate, so far as the admission of European candidates is concerned the G. Committee see no reason to interdict the practice or to interfere therewith, so long as it is attended with every circumspection on the part of the Lodge.'” The wording was carefully chosen, no doubt to assuage the feelings of certain Masons in Bombay—most likely the members of *Rising Star* (see below)— but in reality all that the decision amounted to was a *recommendation* to exercise due caution when initiating members of the other race, something that all lodges everywhere were to supposed to do with all candidates.

[95] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 15. He was also the first Indian admitted as a Fellow of the Royal Society in London. To be sure, his technical skills would probably have been enough to warrant his acceptance into that body, but it may be no coincidence that the Royal Society was dominated by Masons from its inception in the 17th century.

Alikhan—not Parsis, who would have been the Indian government workers Burnes specifically speaks of wanting to get into the Craft[96] Since Lodge *Rising Star* had an agreement with Lodge *Perseverance* not to initiate Europeans (although it could accept them as joining members),[97] in time the Indian membership was destined to outnumber the European. However, the lodge struggled along for a number of years, partly because Maneckji Cursetji—who repeatedly emphasized "quality, not quantity"—was so careful in scrutinizing applicants for initiation,[98] and partly because of intense opposition by the leaders of the Parsi community. In his letter to the *Freemasons' Quarterly Review* in 1844, "Frater" (see above) accuses "some of the old but most influential native gentlemen [of] putting, as far as they can do so, a direct veto on those over whom they have influence from entering the Order, whilst the only reason... is that it will bring them into too near a contact with Europeans, and that they may be led to eat and drink with them.".... [T]his check has had some influence, especially amongst the Parsees."[99] It is due to this, "Frater" points out, that Indians whose traditional caste or religious rules prevented commensality with others were not obliged by the Masonic fraternity to interdine. However, he predicts that with time even this bar on socializing would vanish, and he boasts to the *Quarterly Review* that there had already been eight Indian initiates (what he doesn't say is that these were mostly Persian merchants), and that others were anxious to be accepted into the Craft. "Frater" trusts that once these Masons' fellow caste members notice their Masonic behavior, their conduct and example "will no doubt ultimately soften down, if not entirely do away with, existing prejudices which a want of knowledge alone has given birth to, *for the bright light of truth must one day clear away*

[96] See ibid., 15-19.

[97] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 50, 53, 55

[98] Letter from Maneckji Cursetji to "Bar" [Presumably Henry J. Barr, Substitute Provincial Grand Master—see A. Finan, 55], dated July 20, 1854; Appendix I, in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 377-84. Apparently, Maneckji had assured Burnes in 1843 that he would see that "none but the most worthy natives of the class for whose reception the lodge was founded would be admitted into its portals"—D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 13-14.

[99] In *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, (new series) (September, 1845): 361-64.

the dark and dismal clouds of calumny, superstition and ignorance."[100] Clearly, the process of initiating actual *Indians*, as opposed to other Asiatics, such as Persians, was still difficult, with opposition coming from Indian society, as well.

"Frater" also states that the responsibility of European Masons in relation to their Indian Brothers is to

> carefully instruct them in the principles and in the working out of the *grand end and aim of the institution, to show that there is at least one place here on earth where men of every denomination may meet on terms of brotherhood and equality, whatever may be his colour, or whatever may be his creed, so long as he believes in the one true and living God, looks forward hereafter for reward and punishment for deeds done in the flesh, and lives an honest and upright life before God, and with his neighbour;* and to prove to them, that, although their different prejudices may not allow them to eat together, they may advantageously join together in the performance of good works, and in the cultivation of every virtue, that brotherly love may be encouraged, relief practised, and truth be triumphant; *that they may be taught to despise the littleness of sectarian prejudices and to view in every son of Adam a brother of the dust.*[101]

In this one letter, we find a declaration—almost certainly made by James Burnes himself—of the main goals of Freemasonry in India: to foster a strong belief in the oneness of God; the brotherhood and equality of all men; reward and punishment in the life to come; brotherly love; and virtuous behavior—namely, relief to the poor, honesty, and anti-sectarianism.

By 1853, a new trend was emerging: the lodge initiated that year, two Muslims, two non-European Christians (apparently Goans, by their Portuguese names), and seven Parsis.[102] The lodge's membership soon became mostly Parsi, with a sprinkling of Muslims, Hindus, and Europeans, and has remained so until today. Hindus were only allowed to join the lodges after 1873, because until then it was believed that polytheism and the caste system made Hindus, by definition, irreconcilable to the Masonic principles of belief in a single Supreme Being, the equality of all men, and the rejection of

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[100] Ibid., and D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 41 (italics mine).

[101] Ibid., and D.F. Wadia, 39-40 (italics mine).

[102] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 88.

idolatry.[103] Despite the demographic shift, though, the lodge's fortunes proceeded in fits and starts in the first decade and a half of its existence. For example, in 1850, of the five lodges under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India, Lodge *Rising Star* had taken in the fewest new members—four—and in 1856 the Master of the lodge, John Evans, reported to the P.G.L. that he had put the lodge in temporary abeyance, "owing to the paucity of members."[104]

In the years to come, however, the lodge's membership would include a number of prominent Parsis, such as Naoroji Furdunji, K.R. Cama, Framji Dinshaw Petit (son of the Baronet), J.J. Modi, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji (the first Member of Parliament of Indian origin—1892-5), Sir M.M. Bhownagree (the second M.P. of Indian origin—1895-1906), Sir Dinshaw Maneckji Petit, Bart., and D.F. Karaka (author of *History of the Parsis* and a Commander of the Star of India)[105] Furthermore, the other Parsi baronets, Jehangir and Jeejeebhoy, both donated money to the lodge in memory of brothers or fathers who had been members.[106]

In addition to such prominent Parsis, Lodge *Rising Star* also had as a member the Muslim baronet, Currimbhoy Ebrahim, as well as five of his sons,[107] and the Hindu knight, Mangaldas Nathubhoy. N.G. Chandavarkar, who would be knighted in 1910, was a member of the lodge until 1901.[108] In 1910, three *Rising Star* members were appointed as Additional Members of the Governor's Legislative Council.[109] Although we will never know the thinking behind such administrative decisions by the British, there clearly seems to have been a nexus between Freemasonry and government in Bombay—and a

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[103] See ibid., 64-67, 97, 409.

[104] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 49, 56.

[105] See Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsis in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change* (Munich: Weltforum Verlag, 1974), 98.

[106] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 295, 304.

[107] Ibid., 331.

[108] Ibid., 306. Chandavarkar was also a member of at least two other lodges, *Aryan* (est. 1878) and *Imperial Brotherhood* (est. 1908).

[109] Ibid., 337.

structural parallel emerges between the partnership of Indians and Britons in running Freemasonry in western India and the increasing partnership of the races in the political life of the Presidency. Both of these assertions will be explored further in later chapters.

Speaking at a meeting of the newly formed Poona lodge, *St. Andrews in the East* (founded 1844), on July 30, 1844, seven months after the founding of *Rising Star*, James Burnes, the Provincial Grand Master for Scottish Freemasonry in India, and also the current Master of *Rising Star*, further spells out his reasons for sanctioning and encouraging a systematic effort to initiate Indians of "acknowledged character and respectability":

> It was pressed upon me by, if I mistake not, twenty-six of our most eminent brethren at Bombay, all of whom had come to the conclusion, that the time was arrived when Native Gentleman of acknowledged character & respectability, such for instance as those placed by Government on the bench of justice, being under the fear of God, and disposed to act benevolently, should no longer be excluded from our Brotherhood; and I gave my sanction to the measure, not from feeling the force of the representation, but *also because I had experienced the impossibility of maintaining Masonry with effect, exclusively from amidst a Society so circumscribed and so liable to constant fluctuation and change as the European portion of the Bombay community.*[110]

Having outlined the pragmatic imperative which induced him to open a lodge for Indians—the need to bring in Indians to maintain Freemasonry in India (much as the British had to rely on Indians to maintain the Raj)—Burnes goes on to set forth the civilizing mission of Freemasonry in the East, and the role of Indians in it:

> I also felt that, posted *as we were on the very verge of Civilization*, we were bound, as enlightened men, to encourage this movement and to seize any opportunity that offered of spreading the truly philanthropic principles of our order throughout Asia; for, as I took occasion to remark at the last convocation of the "Provincial Grand Lodge," *the mighty field on which we labour offers ample scope to all, from whatever quarter of the Earth they may come, who are ready to take up our implements, and to use them worthily*; nor in the erection of the Temple which we are bound to raise can it signify [i.e., matter] to us, as the builders, nor will it impair the regularity and utility of the edifice itself, *that the*

[110] *Minutes of Lodge "St. Andrews in the East," No. 343, S.C.*, for July 30, 1844 (14th Meeting). Courtesy of Mr. Larry Grant, Lodge Secretary (italics mine).

> *stones of which it is to be composed consists of white marble or of black, so be it that they are chosen.* The Craft generally may be assured, that the utmost care has been, and will be, taken to ascertain that they are so adapted."[111]

For Burnes, the Enlightenment notion of "civilization" can be promoted by people of any race, so long as they are "chosen," based on the impeccability of their character.

Henry Fawcett, a Bombay merchant, and another founding member of Lodge *Rising Star* who attended the same meeting in Poona, describes the class of Indian who were deemed most eligible for initiation: the western-educated.

> It has been a source of much gratification to me, Worshipful Master and Brethren, to have borne a humble part in the labours of Lodge Rising Star. Our Worshipful Master has informed you of the reasons which induced him to consent, on the requisition of a large body of the Brethren at the Presidency to consecrate that Lodge for the express purpose of extending masonic knowledge amongst *such of the natives of India as were formed by education and good report to be worthy of acceptance by the Craft.*[112]

Like "Frater," Fawcett, an officer of Lodge *Rising Star*, discusses the opposition received from other Indians, due to "superstition and bigotry," and his confidence that in time the light of Masonry will vanquish these foes:

> ...no good or great work of this nature can be expected to flourish without opposition, and Lodge Rising Star in the West has not been an exception - the usual means adopted by hostile spirits have been abundantly called into action; misrepresentation has been busy, and intimidation the accustomed weapon of superstition and bigotry, has been in full operation against us - yet am I convinced that the great work will advance in spite of every check, to a glorious triumph of the principles of the Craft—that the star which has risen will prove the bright harbinger of the sun of masonry, which will scatter blessings around with its every beam—that, instruction will flow from it, producing as it ever does an insatiable thirst for further knowledge, before which superstition must shroud its blasted head, and ignorance and bigotry seek together their kindred shades of darkness. Though we may have "shuffled off this mortal coil" and be mouldering in our parent earth, when such bright reality arrives, yet it is within our power, as it is the duty of all, even the humblest, to pave the way for the glorious consummation by the exhibition of masonic charity and brotherly love - and *to prove... that the Craft are indeed a band of brothers, amongst whom there is no place for jealousy, no room for discord.*"[113]

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[111] Ibid. (italics mine).

[112] Ibid. (italics mine).

[113] Ibid. (italics mine).

With the rhetoric of the Enlightenment ("superstition must shroud its blasted head"), Freemasonry in India was pitting itself against the dark shades of "ignorance and bigotry." The words are those of a Freemason, but they could just as easily have been those of a Utilitarian or an Evangelical. However, in the case of Masonry, this project was not for India alone, but rather for the world—including Europe—where Masons often saw themselves pitted against the dark forces of superstition in the Catholic Church, especially in the 19th century. Of course, the rhetoric could easily be transferred to India when Masons encountered religious obscurantism resembling (in their view) that of Rome. But Freemasonry was not dismissive of Eastern civilization in the manner of Macauley; rather it was deeply engaged in antiquarianism and the study of Eastern religions, as a future chapter will show. And unlike the Christian Evangelicals—who pursued rapid and mass conversion—the Masons claimed only to be looking for "good men and true,"[114] because proper "character," as noted above, was an obsession when considering Indians for initiation into Freemasonry, the assumption of many Britons being that Indians were less ethical and more self-seeking than most Europeans in India (although this was certainly not the Duke of Sussex's view back in England—see above). Ironically, this was also the view of none other than Maneckji Cursetji, who wrote in 1854:

> In the case of natives of this country, the duty—I may add responsibility—increases tenfold; painful as it is to me, truth forces me to say that they, as a body, sadly require that moral impress to befit them into general society, much less that of ours.... The more I think of this as a man and a Mason, the greater I feel the responsibility we have assumed in throwing open and widening the portals of masonry to the natives of this country, and in corresponding ratio the greater degree of circumspection is requisite....[115]

Nor was Cursetji alone among Indians in wanting to exercise extreme caution when initiating Indians. In his outgoing speech as Master of the lodge in December 1862,

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[114] In his letter, "Frater" states that "the Bombay brethren do not look forward to, or wish for,.. a great influx of members,... on the contrary, they are most careful and cautious in their selections."

[115] Letter from Maneckji Cursetji to "Bar" [Henry Barr?], dated July 20, 1854; Appendix I in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 384.

Kharshedji R. Cama (Maneckji Cursetji's son-in-law), said "that the lodge should not be sorry if ninety-nine good men our of hundred [*sic*] were rejected in order that even one bad person might not by chance be admitted into the Craft...."[116] This concern explains the other important reason for the informal arrangement whereby *Rising Star* was to initiate only Indians, and Lodge *Perseverance* (the other lodge in Bombay in the 1840s), only Europeans: it was believed that Indian Masons could more effectively probe the character of Indian candidates than could Europeans. But this arrangement began breaking down in the 1860s. When the Provincial Grand Master for Scotland in Bombay, Richard B. Barton, visited *Rising Star* in 1867, K.R. Cama, who was the Provincial Grand Secretary, as well as a member of the lodge, stated that "native" lodges were better fit than European ones to inquire after the good character of Indian applicants. Until the present time, said Cama,

> a Native Mason was necessarily supposed to have belonged to *Rising Star*, for that was the only lodge which undertook the initiation of Natives, and the strictness with which this lodge selected its members being well known, a Native Mason was taken to be a strictly worthy brother. But matters have now changed; candidates failing to get admittance here have tried other quarters, and have succeeded.... But the other lodges, being composed of Europeans, have not had the requisite means within their power to make strict previous inquiries into the antecedents and characters of their Native candidates.[117]

Cama was particularly concerned with Lodge *St. Andrew's in the East* in Poona, where Indians from Bombay who didn't think they would pass *Rising Star's* strict criteria for good character were going in order to get initiated. Nowadays, warned Cama, a Mason "with a pugree on his head must not be supposed necessarily to hail from *Rising Star*."[118] Yet, even as it became less possible to do so, members of *Rising Star* such as K.R. Cama

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[116] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 137.

[117] K.R. Cama, speech in Lodge *Rising Star*, August 20, 1867, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 6 September 1867): 227-28. Prior to this Cama had so exercised his fellow lodge-members over the issue that the lodge got up a letter to Cama in his capacity as Provincial Grand Secretary to have him raise the issue with Barton. See Letter from Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 342 (Jehangir Merwanji, Secretary), to K.R. Cama, Secretary, Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India, dated October 22, 1866; Appendix M in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 397-99.

[118] Ibid., 228.

were dogged in trying to maintain, even into the late 1860s, that lodge's role as the clearinghouse for Indians Masons, ostensibly in the greater interests of Masonry's reputation.[119] Barton simply could not comply with Cama's request, however, because as more lodges were established this pact could not be enforced, for he knew well that it infringed on the exclusive and constitutional right of lodges to initiate whom they will.[120] This is clear evidence that predominantly European lodges, especially in the *mofussil*, had begun initiating Indians into Freemasonry at least by the 1860s. So, while the arrangement seems to have been maintained by Masons within Bombay City, it was not adhered to in the rest of the Presidency.[121] Indeed, even knowledge of it does not seem to have extended much beyond Bombay City. In 1869, a letter in the *Masonic Record* from a European Mason (presumably from the *mofussil*) expresses shock and dismay that Indian and European Masons in Bombay maintain separate lodges and do not initiate members of the other race:

> If there is anything which fills one with apprehension about the good of Freemasonry in Bombay, it is the difference which exists in the *Preachings* and

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119 See Appendix M in ibid., 398, where the lodge states, in 1866, that strict scrutiny into the character of candidates "accounts for the paucity of the members of this Lodge and for the non-increase of other Native Lodges." The founding of Lodge *Eastern Star* under the English Constitution less than a year later would herald the *increase* of other Native lodges.

120 See *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 6 (September 1867): 225-37. See also D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 156: "Brother Barton... expressed his opinion that the Provincial Grand Lodge could not interfere in the matter, but he trusted that the Brethren of Lodge St. Andrews would not be wanting in the exercise of their good sense in the choice of native gentlemen from Bombay...." Note the turn-around from the P.G.L.'s attitude in 1853, above! At this time, by contrast, the District Grand Lodge of Bengal (E.C.) was still enforcing its By-Law 55 which required any lodge wanting to initiate an "Asiatic" to submit his application to the D.G.L. (which made sure that few if any Indians were initiated). That District Grand Lodge was already in a fight with the Grand Lodge in England (under Lords Zetland and Ripon) over the constitutionality of such a by-law—a fight it would eventually lose.

121 Although, see D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 156, where Wadia says that after Lodge *Rising Star's* complaints to Barton, and his expression of hope that St. Andrew*'s* would use good sense in the matter, "be it said to the credit of these Brethren that they did thereafter discontinue the practice of initiating natives of Bombay whose character and antecedents they could have no means of knowing, and promised not to admit natives who were not actual residents of Poona as the result of communications addressed to them." How long this lasted, though, is unclear. Also, when Lodge *Barton* opened in 1867 in Lonavla, halfway up the rail lines from Bombay to Poona, Indians who traveled between the two cities often sought initiation there. A little later, in any case, there were a number of "Native" lodges in Bombay City itself—*Eastern Star* (1867), *Rising Sun* (1871), *Cyrus* (1871), *Islam* (1876), and *Aryan* (1877)—and so *Rising Star* would have lost control over the initiation of Indians even in its home town.

> *Practices* of some of the members who constitute these Lodges. I hear that Natives are *rigorously* excluded from being *initiated* in the English Lodges; and so do the Native Lodges treat Europeans. Surely this is extremely against the spirit of Freemasonry; for it is directly in opposition to one of its *best tenets*, which inculcates the association of a number of men for a particular adoration, as vital to its existence, be they of what creed or clime."[122]

As mentioned earlier, in 1885 the Provincial Grand Lodge would cease its support of the arrangement in Bombay City itself, even in principle. Neverthless, the issue at the root of the matter—"character"—never stopped being a concern to the Masons, as it didn't for the British in India generally, and *Rising Star's* probity in this area became well-known in the district and a standard for other lodges, both Indian and European. At a Provincial Grand Lodge meeting on June 29, 1865, Richard Barton the P.G. M., "referred to the practice which had grown up of not exercising ordinary caution in admitting candidates for initiation and to cases of Masons brought up for trial before him as a Magistrate" [Barton was Chief Magistrate of Bombay], and he referred to Lodge *Rising Star*, "where the strictest scrutiny was made before a candidate was proposed or initiated."[123]

IV. CONTINUED INDIAN OPPOSITION TO FREEMASONRY

That the opposition to Indians joining Freemasonry was not from the European quarter alone is amply demonstrated in a talk delivered at the Masonic Hall in Bombay in 1876, by Kharshedji Rustomji Cama (1831-1909), prominent Mason, Parsi reformer, and Orientalist scholar, who describes the prejudices which Parsis desirous of initiation into Freemasonry confronted more than half a century earlier (i.e., *circa* 1825, or about twenty years earlier than other authors date the beginnings of Parsi interest in Freemasonry):

> Dear Brethren,—The natives of Bombay who first bestowed any thought on the subject of Freemasonry, were the Parsees. But a good deal of misconceived and unfounded prejudice against it was entertained and exhibited in the Parsee community, when, more than half a century ago, an earnest spirit of inquiry regarding the principles of Freemasonry was first aroused among the foremost and intelligent members of that community.... Freemasonry was, in the absence of any

[122] Letter to the editor from "R.A.M.," in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 1 (April, 1869): 35 (italics in original).
[123] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 151-52.

> correct knowledge about it, denounced to be a Christian institution, as one requiring its initiates to reverence and acknowledge Moses and Jesus as their prophets; and upon this and other misconceptions the aspirants were warned not to join an institution which, it was further alleged, was in several respects at variance with the exact observance of the Zoroastrian faith.[124]

Cama states that in that earlier age, probably the 1840s and before, when "English education was so little appreciated as to necessitate it to be gratuitously offered to, and coaxingly thrust on, the native community," only a few people could distinguish between the English words "Masonry" and "Missionary," due to their similarity in sound. The latter word was identified negatively in the Parsi community with Christian proselytization, and even as late as 1865 Parsi mobs were not averse to using violence to stop their co-religionists from converting to Christianity, as one report shows: "A Parsee having manifested an interest in Christianity, a Parsee mob assembled, and one of them struck the youth with a whip; he was fined 20 rupees."[125]

Due to the mistaken identity in the words, "Freemasonry was proclaimed and denounced to be at once associated with, and derived from, the Christian religion; and, indeed, an outward colour and semblance was, in their minds, given to that clamour, by it having come to be known that Freemasons of different castes and creeds were generally expected, disregarding their sectarian prejudices, to dine together at the same board."[126] Although, "Frater" mentions above that interdining was not imposed, so as not to pollute a member's ritual purity *vis-à-vis* the religious community to which he belonged, nevertheless, the common perception was that commensality did occur. Among the Parsis of those times, there was an "extraordinary" prejudice against dining with people of other religions: "a man proved guilty of it, was, in fact, socially ostracised. A desire to dine with aliens in religion was seriously taken to amount to a desire to forsake one's own religion, and to give preference to a strange one."[127] Cama tells his audience that

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[124] K.R. Cama, "A Discourse on Zoroastrians and Freemasonry" (1876), 1-2.
[125] "General Intelligence" for July 1865, in *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 5 (August 1865): 185.
[126] K.R. Cama, "A Discourse on Zoroastrians and Freemasonry" (1876), 3.
[127] Ibid., 3-4.

although a spread of education and a better comprehension of the Zoroastrian religion has led to a situation where such prejudice is "not now met with in the intensity of bygone days," yet, even in 1876,

> one must be very bold to say that they are entirely removed and are now extinct totally. Even at the present day there are not a few among us who, though they fully appreciate and acknowledge the good to be derived from Freemasonry, and express themselves inclined favorably to it, and who, indeed, from their worth and position, would shed lustre on our Order were they to belong to it, yet persistently refrain from joining us, on the plea of conscientious scruples which they say they feel for dining with men of other races and religions.[128]

The minutes of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 312 (S.C.), for June 20, 1865, mention that K.R. Cama proposed for initiation a Parsi Dastur (a category of Parsi priest) from the Deccan, "Dustoor Hosungji Jamaspje." *Shams-ul-Ulama, Sirdar, Khan Bahadur*, Dastur Hosang Jamasp, Ph.D., later the Parsi High Priest of the Deccan, was a man who in his person combined western-style scholarship with religious leadership. Like K.R. Cama, the Dastur also contributed to European Orientalist studies.[129] At the time, Cama acknowledged "that some of the brethren are of the opinion that the position of the Dustoor amongst his constituents will be marred by his becoming a Mason, as the majority of orthodox Parsees believe that Masonry has a greater affinity to Christianity."[130] In his 1876 talk, Cama recalls this affair in more detail:

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[128] Ibid., 4.

[129] Born in 1833, Dastur Hosang Jamasp, among other things, in 1864-65 edited, annotated, translated, and published old Zoroastrian manuscript works written in Zand, Pazand, and Pahlavi. "In this capacity his labor has been of the highest importance to Zend and Pehlvi [*sic*] literature, as he has been able to place before the savants of Europe works which had hitherto been inaccessible to them.... In 1874 Government appointed the Dastoor an assistant professor of Oriental languages,... and in 1884 raised him to the status of a Persian professor in the Deccan College. In 1884 the Parsee community elected him to succeed his eldest brother as the High Priest of the Deccan and Malwa. From 1877 to 1884 the Dastoor was examiner in Persian to the University of Bombay, and during the same period he held a seat in the Poona Municipality.... In 1886, His Imperial Majesty Francis Joseph I., of Austria, was pleased to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy."—C.B. Burrows, comp., *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Historical Publishing Company, 1900), 81.

[130] Quoted in the *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July, 1865): 61. See also *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 4 (July, 1865): 152—"The Worshipful Master [i.e., D. Ruttonjee Colah] rose and said that he was glad to hear R.W. Bro. K.R. Cama's proposition [i.e., to let the news spread around the Parsi community for two to three months to see what the reaction might be, so that the Dastur might better judge the wisdom of joining] and remarked that the provision he made with respect to it though unusual, was quite advisable, as

> I was prepared for a great deal of prejudicial opposition to be made to him, which, indeed, came in volleys from every direction. "What a desecration," clamoured the ignorant and the bigotted, "for a Dustoor to become a Freemason!"—to go to learn what they imagined to be the tenets and principles of Christian religion, and, most horrible of all, to consent to dine with people of other religions, etc. I need not mention that Mobeds and Dustoors do not dine on the same table with their own fellow-Zoroastrians also, and it was in vain to expect the Dustoor to join our Masonic banquet; but I had hoped in this case to have made dinner no part of his Masonry. Of course, there was no other help, and the initiation did not take place.[131]

Thus, even in the late 1870s, at least a substantial minority of Parsis, the community most open to western education in India (along with Bengal's *bhadralok*) and the most self-reforming along western lines, nevertheless still felt ritually polluted when dining with non-Parsis. Freemasonry was popularly perceived as being opposed to such traditional and ritual barriers between people, which led many to avoid joining the Craft, even while they might wholeheartedly endorse its ethical principles. "Freemasonry," then, became a byword for undermining the barriers of ritual pollution, which reinforced the corporatist outlook and nature of Indian communities, by joining all men together as brothers. This had been the hope of those British who promoted the entry of Indians into Freemasonry, and it was the fear of the traditional leaders of society, who clearly understood the implications of brotherhood. Even their mistaken notion that Masonry was a sect of Christianity is easy to understand, since many Christians Masons were themselves not of one mind concerning the Christian element in Masonry.

According to Cama, many Parsis of an earlier generation also objected to Masonry on the grounds that Masonic funeral rites were carried out "at the deprivation of their own sectarian ones—an acquiesence in which custom was felt to be fatal to a Zoroastrian entering a Masonic Lodge."[132]

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the Dustoor's position among the Parsee Community was a peculiar one...." Colah, too, recognizes the controversy which initiating a High Priest into Freemasonry will probably engender among the Parsis.

[131] K.R. Cama, "A Discourse on Zoroastrians and Freemasonry" (1876), 14. Cama does not refer to the Dastur by name in the 1876 lecture, so the identification with Dustoor Hosungji Jamaspje is not certain. Circumstantial evidence would seem to support the identification, however.

[132] Ibid., 4.

K. R. Cama's 1876 talk is not only a history of Parsi opposition to Freemasonry, it is also an effort by religious reformers to remove forever all religiously-based objections to Parsis joining Freemasonry.[133] It is an *apologia* which attempts to prove—based on the new familiarity with Avestan which Parsi scholars were then gaining, along with knowledge of the Indo-European dispersion—that Parsi prejudices against those of other faiths were actually insupportable on scriptural grounds. Cama does this first by describing the similarity between the teachings of Zoroastrianism and those of Freemasonry, although he refuses to call the latter a religion since it has no prophet and no particular "Volume of the Sacred Law" (i.e., Holy Book). However, he does call Freemasonry a "cosmopolitan religion, inasmuch as it embraces within its fold professors of all the monotheistic religions existing on the face of the earth. This is the genuine secret and beauty of our institution."[134] Thus, in

> meeting a Freemason, a Zoroastrian meets one who is in accord with him on the two main most important principles of his religion, *viz.*, a belief in one God, and in rewards and punishments in after-life in the measure of ones deeds here below. The more we contemplate, the more we are convinced that Zoroastrians should flock into Freemasonry, rather than shun it, if they desire to meet and associate with men of a like belief with them.[135]

Cama acknowledges another Parsi objection that, according to Zoroastrian Scripture (the 12th Ha of the *Yacna*), a Zoroastrian is duty-bound to help a fellow Zoroastrian before helping others, whereas a Zoroastrian Freemason "*recognises no caste distinctions*,... [and] is bound to extend brotherly love, relief, and truth to his brethren of the Craft, *be they of any caste, colour, or clime*. His sympathies ought not to be confined to his own people.... To him all the world should be an extensive brotherhood."[136] Nothing in the Zoroastrian Scriptures, Cama argues, could possibly prevent a Zoroastrian

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[133] For more on the great divide between reformers and traditional orthodox in the Parsi community at this time see, for example, "General Intelligence" for November 1869, in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 9 (December 1869): 342—"Jamesetjee Sorabjee Mudun, the defendant in the Parsee Priest Defamation case, was sentenced to nine months simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 2,000; the trial occupied four days."

[134] K.R. Cama, "A Discourse on Zoroastrians and Freemasonry" (1876), 5.

[135] Ibid., 9.

[136] Ibid. (italics mine).

Freemason from helping a fellow Christian, Muslim, or Hindu Freemason. Cama dismisses what appears to be a widely-held view among Zoroastrians that theirs is the only religion in which the good and the pious can be found, and refers to the Avesta itself in support: "Whilst the Zoroastrian recognises his own religion as the best religion in the superlative, other religions recognised in the Avesta are called better religions in the comparative degree. Whilst the Zoroastrian religion is always mentioned in the singular, the next best ones are always in the plural, indicating that to one to be followed there were several to be respected and esteemed."[137] Since the Avesta does not clearly identify these "next best religions," Cama attempts to do so, arguing that they are any religions which are not polytheistic and which believe in rewards and punishment in the after-life, based on one's deeds in this life. This is similar to Freemasonry, he says: "Now, we know for a certainty that none are admitted into Freemasonry who believe in polytheism, in transmigration of souls, etc., and hence once being assured that one is a Freemason, a Zoroastrian can freely fraternise with him without waiting to inquire to what faith he belongs."[138] Thus, for the Zoroastrian, Freemasonry acts as an easy screening mechanism to identify those who belong to the "next best religions" category (unless, of course, one is a Zoroastrian Mason, and thus a member of the "best religion").

This is the first evidence we have that the Masonic belief in rewards and punishment in the next life for deeds done in this one specifically precluded a belief in the transmigration of souls. Cama states that when Lodge *Rising Star* was established,

> considering the nature of the numerously different faiths professed by the natives of this country, for whose sole benefit this Lodge was founded, it was deemed absolutely necessary to introduce one more test [i.e., besides the one regarding belief in one God] which would go a good way in clearly establishing what natives were qualified by their religion to be received in that Lodge, and what not. The additional test was purposed to discover and ascertain the religious belief of the aspirant as regards the next world, and hence the question was framed as follows—"Do you believe in a state of reward and punishment in after-life,

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[137] Ibid., 11.
[138] Ibid., 12.

> according to deeds done in the flesh?" This test implicitly indicated, supported by the [Masonic] constitutions, that Freemasonry believed in rewards and punishments in the next world, not according to one's belief in certain dogmas, but according to one's deeds done in the flesh, and so it was made a *sine quá non* for all native candidates.[139]

This emphasis on reward and punishment based on one's *acts* rather than one's religious *creed* was equally (if not more) relevant to European Christians. Indeed, the rise of Freemasonry's popularity in the early modern period in Europe coincides with a revulsion over the Thirty Years' War of the 17th century, where credal differences had caused immense violence. In short, Freemasonry adopts a Pelagian stance, basing salvation on moral deeds, not on faith, and, in doing so, altogether undermines Augustine's—and, before him, Paul's—solifidian doctrine (i.e., of salvation only by faith in Jesus Christ).[140] Why the extra test employed by Lodge *Rising Star* should be explicitly applied to all Indian, but not to European, candidates is strange. What is even more strange is that it was interpreted to be a rejection of transmigration, since all Indian theories of transmigration involve the law of *karma*, which is defined by rewards and punishments after death for deeds done in a prior life. Perhaps the notion that one was being rewarded or punished in *this* life for deeds done in another earthly existence about which one had no memory was believed by certain Masons to lead inevitably to fatalism, where one simply accepts one's lot in life and makes no effort to change the circumstances of life and society through hard work and discipline. In any case, this interpretation rejecting a belief in transmigration is nowhere spelled out in the By-Laws of Indian lodges or Provincial Grand Lodges. The implication for Hindu applicants to Masonry would have been profound, yet we have no evidence that Hindus were forced to reject a belief in transmigration. One wonders, then, if Cama was not exaggerating the tenets of Freemasonry in an attempt to make the Order palatable to orthodox Zoroastrians.

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139 Ibid., 7.

140 This is still a contributory factor to the difficult relationship between conservative Christianity and Freemasonry. See *The Christian Century*, vol. 102 (April 17, 1985): 378, which describes Masons as being "under fire" from the Vatican and Church of England, and vol. 104 (August 26, 1987): 714, where a Church of England report declares that Freemasonry and Christianity are not compatible.

Only in Freemasonic literature do we encounter the breadth and persistence of the ritual and communal prejudices of the Parsis and their religious leaders into the late 19th century. What the Parsi-Masonic conflict demonstrates is that, within the space of a few decades, the Parsis collectively "forgot" their recent past and so reinvented their identity that by the turn of the century they came to appear—even to themselves—as a broad-minded, progressive, and enlightened westernizing community, and a model to be emulated by other Indian communities. Even modern historians have tended to accept this construction unquestioningly.[141] More intriguing is that this new construction of Parsi-ness looked very much like Freemasonry.

V. CONCLUSION

In 1824, the Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, who gave his name to a college and an educational institute in Bombay, wrote that the aim of English education was "to create a class which would diffuse knowledge widely among the people, and thus raise India to her rightful position besides the nations of the West," rather than merely to create a class of clerks for the Company's administrative needs.[142] The seventy-odd years from the initiation of the first Indian Mason, Umdat-ul-Umara, to the founding, in 1843, of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India* to initiate "natives," witnessed the emergence of that new class: the western-educated Indian. Indians from the ranks of this class would ultimately challenge the British government in India, confronting it on its own terms and with its own stated ideals: efficiency, progress, and fairplay.

British Masons in India were confronted by this same class, wielding Masonry's most important ideal: universal brotherhood. However, British Masons also challenged

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[141] See, for example, Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, 23: "Close association [of Europeans] with Parsis was, moreover, possible because they had no taboos on mixing with Europeans...."
[142] Ibid., 28.

themselves to bring their practice closer into line with their stated principles, and Elphinstone's (who almost became a Mason[143]) vision was mirrored in the efforts of James Burnes and his successors in the Provincial Grand Lodge to seek out the western-educated Indians of Bombay in order to train them up as "brothers" who would be their partners in the work of the Craft. Indeed, Burnes believed Masonry would not long survive in India without Indians. In founding Lodge *Rising Star*, European Masons in Bombay took the first formal step in extending the ideal of universal brotherhood to include non-Europeans, thereby conceding that Freemasonry was not just a European or Christian "club." To be sure, the step was not yet applicable throughout India—Bengal remained an important holdout, and even some lodges in Bombay would remain exclusively European for a long time to come—but the writing was on the wall. By 1869, Burnes' hopes were beginning to bear fruit, for in that year a Parsi member of *Rising Star*, K.R. Cama, attained the high honor of being the first Indian to serve as Substitute Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scottish Freemasonry in India, and he actually ruled the Province for a few months while the Provincial Grand Master was away on leave.[144] Indians—as yet mainly Parsis and a few Muslims, to be sure—were becoming the respected partners of British Masons in the management of a fraternal empire in

[143] See Dudley Wright, rev., *Gould's History of Freemasonry Throughout the World*, vol. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 212: Although Mounstuart Elphinstone never became a Mason, on November 30, 1818, "an application was made to the Grand Master for India [i.e., the Marquess of Hastings, Lord Moira], by eight Brethren residing at Poona, in the Deccan, praying for authority to meet as Lodge St. Andrew at that station, also for 'a dispensation for holding a Provincial Lodge, for the purpose of making the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone a Mason, he having expressed a wish to that effect.' The petitioners further requested 'that his name might be inserted in the body of the Warrant, authorizing them to install him, after being duly passes and raised, a Deputy Grand Master for the Deccan.' Of the reply made to this application, no record has been preserved." If Moira did reply it is likely he turned down the Poona Masons: their request to make someone a Provincial Grand Master on the very night he was initiated must have seemed highly irregular to Moira. who had been Acting Grand Master of England prior to his appointment as Governor-General of India. While no functioning lodges survived in Bombay at this time, Moira probably felt Elphinstone could come out to Bengal if he was intent on being initiated. It is possible that a study of lodge records from Bengal might turn up Elphinstone's name. Nevertheless, Elphinstone's nephew (also Lord Elphinstone), ex-Governor of Madras, and Provincial Grand Master for the Madras Presidency, was made an honorary member of *Rising Star* in 1845—see D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 49.

[144] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 316.

India—both in the Scottish Constitution and, to a lesser extent, in the English Constitution, where a few Indian names—Parsis again—show up in the list of officers of the District Grand Lodge of Western India around the same time.

In Bengal, by contrast, British Masons seemed to share the attitude of most government administrators, who needed, yet despised, the western-educated Hindu *babus* they had helped create. There, Bengal's Masons, unlike British imperial administrators, did not feel they needed Indians, so they excluded them altogether. However, the *babus* would not remain content to be forever excluded from a movement as important as Freemasonry, and it was they who initiated the process by which Hindus would be permitted into the Craft on a large scale, both in Bengal and Bombay.

CHAPTER 3

"RACE, RELIGION, AND MASONIC BROTHERHOOD," PT. 2: HINDUS

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of initiating Indians into Freemasonry in the Bombay Presidency after 1844 was not simple, even for Parsis. Not only did racism keep certain lodges all-white—due to many British Freemasons' less than high-minded "clubbing" tendencies, where friendship was more *philos* than *agape*—but there were ideological issues to be dealt with, and also a prospective Indian initiate's fellow community members might object. More importantly, the issue of the admitting Indians generally, and of Hindus, specifically, was not yet generally agreed upon by the lodges of the various British Constitutions present in western India,[1] nor were the Provincial Grand Lodges of the three Presidencies unanimous in letting in Indians. Even correspondence with the Grand Lodges back in Britain was not always decisive in establishing uniformity on the subject: the mail was slow, and delaying tactics, such as requests for reconsideration, and self-serving interpretations of Grand Lodge decisions could be employed by recalcitrant Provincial Grand Lodges to thwart the intent of a Grand Lodge to allow Indians into the Craft (this was true mainly of the English Constitution lodges of Bengal, as we shall see).

While a milestone had been reached in the Bombay Presidency in 1843 with the formation of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, and the initiation of Parsis and Muslims, Bengal, dominated by the English Constitution, was strongly opposed to the admission of all Indians, whether Muslim or Hindu, but especially Hindu. Indeed, the admission of Hindus into the movement was vexatious at the all-India level until as late as 1872/73, although, Hindus were being admitted "without fuss" in small numbers into

[1] Besides English, Scottish, and Irish lodges, there is evidence of two Portuguese lodges having existed in Goa in the early part of the 19th century (which had fallen into abeyance by the late 1860s, the Masons there having become inactive due to Pope Pius IX's condemnation of Freemasonry in the mid-1860s). See *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 5, no. 6 (Sept. 1868): 208. (For the Papal Allocution of September 1865 against Freemasonry, see *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 9, Dec. 1865: 332-34) Presumably there were also French Masonic lodges operating in Pondicherry.

Masonic lodges as early as the 1850s in Madras, according to G.E. Walker, who states that

> the first - the first anywhere, so far as I can discover - were Bros. Ranganatha Sastri in Perfect Unanimity, and Murugesa Mudaliar in Universal Charity, No. 283, both of them in 1857; and the answer to the objectors on the score of caste was conclusively provided by Universal Charity and the Lodge of Rock, No. 260; the former, between 1855 and 1869, initiated (besides a Muslim and a Parsee) a Mudaliar, a Chetty, a Pillai, a Naidu, an Iyengar and an Aiyar - six different Hindu caste-names; and Rock, between 1863 and 1877, initiated seventeen Hindus of seven different caste-names. So much for the different castes being unwilling to sit together.[2]

However, the practice of the District Grand Lodge (E.C.) of Madras seems to have paralleled in importance the status of the Madras Presidency among its sister Presidencies: last among equals. Its initiation of Hindus thus set no precedent for the rest of India; nor were its policies and practices mentioned in the debates which occurred in Bengal and Bombay.

The main objections British Masons in India had to admitting Hindus into Freemasonry—besides those due to out-and-out racism—derived from their belief that Hindus were polytheistic, idolatrous, and caste-conscious, the latter, by definition, being seen to preclude the possibility of universal brotherhood. Moreover, it was argued that Hindus had nothing like a sacred scripture on which to take a binding oath. When viewed in such a light, Hinduism necessarily conflicted with the Enlightenment project for which Freemasonry was a vehicle. Negative views of Hinduism were no doubt reinforced by news items such as the following, appearing in the "General Intelligence" section for the month of October 1864 in the *Masonic Record of Western India*:

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[2] G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India: A Study in Resolved Discords" (Prestonian Lecture for 1979), *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, E.C.), vol. 92 (1979) (published Nov. 1980. Printed in Great Britain by Oxfordshire: Burgess & Son, Abingdon, Ltd.), 182. See also, *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 12 (April, 1871): 477: the membership list for *Rock* Lodge, No. 260 (E.C.)(est. 1787) in Trichinopoly has one Hindu—P.S. Mootoosawmy M. The other thirty-two members are European. Also, *The Masonic Register for India* (1869), 106-10: in three South Indian lodges—*Universal Charity* (Madras), *St. Andrew* (Kamptee), and *Western Star* (Cannanore)—there is a Parsi member, and in another—Lodge *Pitt-MacDonald* (Madras)—there are what appear to be two Christians of Hindu background, S. Jesudasen, and A. Kristnamchari.

> The Rajah of Silighat has been accused of sacrificing a human being to the shrine of Rankumee, and has been seized by the police. The shrine has been razed to the ground, and the Rajah says the whole is a conspiracy, the man said to have been sacrificed having died from a snake-bite, and immediately on his death the people cut off his head and flung it at the feet of the idol.

Whether the Raja really sacrificed a human being, or whether the people performed the gruesome deed of cutting off a snake victim's head posthumously and offering it up to an idol—such stories must have made Hindus appear in European eyes as capable of horrific enormities in the service of their gods. But Western prejudices against Hinduism were also reinforced by a systematic discourse on Hindu society and religion which had evolved over the previous seven decades, or so, and to which Orientalists, Utilitarians, and missionaries had contributed. It would have been almost impossible for British Masons—many of them believing Christians—not to have been influenced by the pervasive negative Western representations of Hinduism. Even "enlightened," western-educated Hindus could be looked on with suspicion by many Britons in India as having only a thin veneer of "civilization" overlying darker impulses deriving from their religion. Or, equally suspicious, they might be agnostic, questioning the basis of morality altogether.[3] As the Calcutta-based *Indian Freemasons' Friend* put it in the late 1850s, western-educated Indians (and *Bhadralok* Hindus are no doubt especially being referred to) are men

> who are in a transition state, rising from a condition of barbarous idolatry to one of European civilization; who are but half educated, and whose characters are less than half-formed, according to the standard of Christian morality; men who are too well informed to hold to the superstitious religion in which they were born, and yet not sufficiently enlightened to rise superior to the demoralizing and degrading system of faith and practice in which they were trained in their early years; whose religion is a nonentity as yet; who see no sacred virtue nor admit a binding claim upon their consciences, whether they appeal to the waters of the

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[3] In the first half of the 19th century, for example, western-educated Bengalis had split into what David Kopf calls the "slavophiles," supporting Radhakanta Deb's *Dharma Sabha*, which had argued against legislation banning *sati*, and the "westernizers," represented by the radically skeptical Henry Derozio and his followers, who constituted the "Young Bengal" movement. See David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 271.

> Ganges or Shasters, or the Koran or the New Testament, in support of any pledge they take.[4]

The last line suggests that even conversion to Christianity might be insufficient to perfect the consciences of such men in any immediate way. As for Indian Muslims, a widespread view among Bengal Masons was that they were not "true" Muslims, because they had been corrupted by Hindu ways.

Parsis don't seem to have been a problem; either because there were still few Parsi Masons in Bengal in the period before 1872; or they were viewed as non-Indian, due to their ancient origins in Iran; or they were seen as thorough-going monotheists and not afflicted with caste-consciousness. At a time when other Indians were still being excluded from Masonry in that Presidency, a Parsi named Jewanjee Pestonjee was initiated on January 16, 1852, in the Calcutta lodge, *Industry and* Perseverance, No. 109 (E.C.), and on June 4, 1852, so was another, named Muncherjee Fromadjee.[5] According to the *Masonic Register for India* for 1869, the Calcutta-based English Constitution lodge, *Anchor and Hope*, No. 232, had a Parsi, B. Pestonjee, as its Junior Warden. Also, a Scottish Constitution lodge in Calcutta, *St. Thomas in the East*, No. 404, had what appears to be a Parsi, D. Denearjee, as its secretary.[6] In the final case, however, it should be noted that Scottish Constitution lodges had been the first to initiate both Parsis and Muslims in Bombay and that may have set some precedent for Scottish lodges in Bengal. There were few Scottish Constitution lodges in Bengal, however.

In Bombay, the negative view of Hinduism, so common among Britons throughout India, was held by many Masons long past 1843/44, when Lodge *Rising Star of Western India* had been founded for the initiation of "Natives." Parsis and Muslims were believed not to be hindered by caste rules and idolatry, and so the bulk of Indian initiates in the years before 1872 came from these communities. Yet, there was also a

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[4] In G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 179.

[5] Walter K. Firminger, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in Olden Times*, part 1, 441.

[6] "Denearjee" appears to be the Parsi name "Diniyar" with the suffix "jee," common to many names in Western India and Bengal. See *The Masonic Register for India* (1869), 76 and 97.

recognition of the importance of bringing Hindus into Freemasonry. Unlike W.H. Hoff's *Indian Freemasons' Friend* in Calcutta, and even J.J. Farnham's short-lived *Indian Journal of Freemasonry* published in Bombay, George Bease's *Masonic Record of Western India* took a positive view of admitting Hindus to Freemasonry.[7] Contrasting the prejudice against admitting Parsis a couple of decades earlier with their subsequent achievements and contributions to Freemasonry, and perceiving that that erstwhile prejudice had now been transferred onto the Hindus, Bease, in the second issue of his journal, attempted to show European Masons that their concerns over admitting Hindus, even when sincere, were greatly unwarranted, and that their opposition was misplaced:

> Prejudice was just as great if not greater against the Parsees some twenty-five years ago; repeated applications failed to procure them admission in any of the Lodges of Bombay; and had it not been for the bold step taken by Bro. Manockjee Cursetjee, who, during his Continental tour, paved the way for his countrymen by getting initiated in one of the first lodges in Paris by his friend the Duke of Cazè, we doubt whether Lodge *Rising Star* would have been in existence this day. And what is the result? The Parsee brethren have established a Lodge and a reputation for themselves; the sincerity, earnestness, and application they throw into their work would do credit to the first Lodge in Europe; we never saw E.A.s [i.e., Entered Apprentices—1st degree] and F.C.s [i.e., Fellow Craftsmen—2nd degree] subjected to such a strict examination in any Lodge in India; and after their labour is over, more social companions cannot be met with at the banquet table. Many of these brethren are scattered all over India now, and not one of them has brought discredit on the Order, but are everywhere striving for advancement, and gaining the good-will and respect of all with whom they are associated.[8]

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[7] Yet, an obituary of W.H. Hoff, who died in Simla in June 1870, states that he had recently been engaged in correspondence with a Calcutta gentleman "on the subject of the analogy existing between the ancient Hindu mysteries and traditions and the mysteries of our Order," but the writer was not familiar with the substance of this correspondence. See *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 9 (Dec. 1870): 327. However, in *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 5 (August 1865), 71, Farnham prints a piece by Hoff, entitled "Freemasonry and Hinduism," showing his interest in the ancient connections between the two: "Southey, that Poet learned in Hindoo Mythology, shows the reader of general literature, in his 'Curse of Kehama,' (splendid Poem!) that there is something of Freemasonry in Hinduism.... The readers... will probably be reminded... of what Bishop Heber saw in the Fort of Chunar, namely, a 'small silver bell' suspended over 'a large slab of black marble,' and a 'rudely carved rose enclosed in a triangle.' 'I was struck,' says the Bishop, 'with the absence of idols, and with the feeling of propriety which made even a Hindoo reject external symbols in the supposed actual presence of the Deity'"

[8] *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May 1864): 46.

Bease held out the hope in 1864 that the western-educated Hindus of Bombay would match the Parsis' achievements in the cause of Freemasonry, and encouraged them to try to find sponsors:

> With regard to Hindoos we cannot say what view the authorities would take in the matter. Let those who feel disposed to join the Order apply for admission to some Lodge in Bombay if they can find Masons bold enough to recommend and vouch for them, and we dare say a fair and impartial decision will be arrived at by the ruling authorities. Young Bombay [i.e., the western-educated Indians of Bombay] stands a better chance than young Bengal, as the majority of the élèves of our Colleges and University are much enlightened, and have flung to the winds a great many of their superstitions and caste prejudices. But we would seriously warn these aspirants after Masonic knowledge, that unless they can prove themselves good men and true, and are prepared solemnly to acknowledge their belief in the only true God without reservation, they had better remain as they are. We should like to see the issue of this question in Bombay.[9]

As in most accounts dealing with the matter of Indians entering Freemasonry, the belief in one God stands out as being absolutely necessary: no compromise was to be made with polytheism. As a concomitant of this, "superstitions" and caste prejudices were to be abandoned, as well. The one prevented enlightenment, and the other universal brotherhood. At a District Grand Lodge (E.C.) of Bombay meeting, on July 2, 1870, James Gibbs, the newly-appointed District Grand Master, took a similar stand when he spoke of the progress Freemasonry had made in India and the special advantages it afforded

> for bringing together Her Majesty's subjects of all castes and creeds, and associating in a bond of social intercourse. He conceived that the benefits to be derived from such intercourse were very many, and would constitute a great help towards the spread of European civilization and the removal of caste prejudices. The Parsees and Mahomedans were finding this out now, and he was delighted to see that they were swelling the ranks of Masonry. He trusted that the day was not far distant when we should be able to receive the Hindus, some of whom, he believed, were already anxious to join, and he urged on all present, from the highest Grand Officer to the last made Master Mason, to assist in this good work by their influence and by their example.[10]

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[9] Ibid.
[10] *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 6 (Sept., 1870): 235.

This statement offers yet another proof that contemporary Masons saw their movement as a vehicle for modern Western civilization and for removing "irrational" (to use Max Weber's term) ascriptive social barriers, such as caste. In a letter to a fellow Parsi, J. N. Dady, who was the Master of the English Constitution's Lodge *Cyrus*, D.R. Chichgur, Master of the Scottish Constitution's Lodge, *Rising Star*, wrote in December 1872 (on the eve of *Cyrus'* plan to initiate some Hindus): "No one is more willing than myself to see Hindus enrolled amongst us, for I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that if this can be done without doing any violence to the spirit of our Order, all the caste prejudices which grind down the Hindus would melt away under the benign influence of Freemasonry and create a social revolution in India."[11] Although few today would associate Freemasonry with missionary zeal and social revolution, such was the vision of leading Masons in late 19th- and early 20th-century Bombay. This vision of social transformation was also shared by a broader ideological community which included British administrators, missionaries, and western-educated Indian elites.

II. 19th–CENTURY PERCEPTIONS OF HINDUISM

The fundamental question for Masons in dealing with Hindus and Hinduism was, what *was* Hinduism? For a 19th-century Briton to have denied that the bulk of Hindus were polytheistic and idolatrous would have seemed to be contradicting observation. Part of the problem was that images which could be prayed to simply offended British Protestant sensibilities. The Catholic Church, because of its own pantheon of saints who could be prayed *through*, if not *to* (although the subtle distinction must have eluded most people, Catholics included), did not condemn outright the obeisance to idols, but sought to transmute it. But the inheritors of a Protestant culture which had fought its own battles with the Catholics over such issues as the use of saints as intermediaries, could not be

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[11] In Appendix O in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342 S.C.* (Bombay: British India Press, 1912), 409.

expected to look tolerantly on what must have seemed like a world of idolatry strangely remininscent of the Old Testament. Indian temples, for example, no doubt struck Britons as comparable to the temples of the Canaanite civilizations which had surrounded the Jews (although, strangely, they did not strike them as comparable to the idolatrous temples of the Graeco-Roman world, which the British admired!). Since Freemasonry demanded monotheism of its members, this was to be a sticking point when considering Hindus for admission.

Moreover, for many Masons—indeed for most Britons and Indians, too—Hinduism seemed inextricably bound up with the caste system. Today, when caste boundaries have been transformed in many areas into larger communal identities, such as "Hindu," or at least into larger, multi-caste, political groupings—for example, Dalit associations to pressure the government for more reservations in government jobs and schools, etc.—it is hard to recall that in the mid-19th century, "Hindus would not only not sit down with men of other religions: the different castes wouldn't even sit down with each other."[12] Excommunication from one's caste was a powerful tool that caste leaders could employ to enforce discipline among recalcitrant members, since it deprived them of social and economic support, as well as marriage opportunities for their children. Such a system of rigid ritual corporatism was clearly at odds with the Masonic principles of equality within the lodge and universal brotherhood. If caste and Hinduism were synonymous (and for most it looked like they were), this meant that a "true" Hindu would necessarily be a "casteman" and hence could not also be a Mason. Also, if an "enlightened" Hindu—one who rejected the caste system—sought admission into Freemasonry, to what religion did he then belong, and on what Scripture could he then be obligated? The prevailing belief among many Britons was that a Hindu who "broke caste"—i.e., had suffered excommunication (or looked like he might), due to the breaking of caste rules—was by definition not a Hindu, and hence could not be obligated on a

[12] G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 181.

Hindu Scripture, nor on any other (since he also now belonged to no religious community). When members of a Calcutta lodge proposed a "highly distinguished and respectable" Hindu for initation into Freemasonry in the 1840s, John Grant, the Provincial Grand Master, recounted that "'an insuperable difficulty presented itself in the question of how he was to be obligated. This was more especially the case as he was understood to live at variance with many of the rules of caste.'"[13] Thus, Hindus were damned if they were "caste-men" and damned if they weren't!

The identity of caste and Hinduism has been an enduring one: M.N. Srinivasa, India's foremost sociologist, asserts that only in the 20th century, due to increased secularization, mobility and the spread of an equalitarian ideology, has the caste system ceased perpetuating "values considered to be an essential part of Hinduism"—that present-day Hinduism has to some extent become "free floating," that is, uncoupled from caste, family system, and village community.[14] Little wonder, then, if in the 19th century the British in India could not see Hinduism as a religious ideology distinct from caste. Also, while the notion of Hindus running about not belonging to any caste, might have been desirable from the perspective of Enlightenment thinking (since it meant the end of medieval corporatism), from the perspective of ruling a vast and diverse land like India, the colonial government could not have contemplated such a possibility without grave anxieties. Caste and religion were necessary in making sense of, and controlling, the complexity of India, and the government took great pains to categorize the different populations of India under its rule. In the first Indian Census of 1871, Indians were categorized by "caste, if Hindu; otherwise, by religion." To be sure, rules of ritual purity based on caste were the basis for such thinking and policy, so such catogories were not an arbitrary or one-sided affair on the part of the British.

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[13] In ibid., 179. It should be noted, however, that for the purposes of bearing witness under oath, the court system did not hold this view, and allowed those testifying to swear by a sacred book which they believed in.

[14] M.N. Srinivasa, *Social Change in Modern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 137 and 142.

By the mid-19th century, research on Hinduism and Hindu civilization and translations of Hindu texts, by both Indians themselves (such as Ram Mohan Roy) and western scholars (for example, members of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal), were beginning to "rediscover" a more "rational" type of Hinduism than the contemporary one—one more palatable to western-educated Hindus who feared deracination, and more defensible against Western critics. Hindu reformers described caste, idolatry, and polytheism as man-made accretions or misinterpretations, none of which represented the original—and, hence, pristine—religion of the Hindus. But it was one thing to reinterpret Hinduism as a "modern" religion, and quite another to implement that reinterpretation on the ground. This process had only just begun by mid-century, and it often encountered stiff opposition from the orthodox. For many European Masons, who still dealt with the "unreformed" world on the ground, the world of a Hindu, with its complex set of caste rules, remained a closed world. John Grant, P.G.M. for Bengal, expressed this feeling succinctly: "'Shut up beyond our reach by a strict and impenetrable circle of exclusion, ... of their virtues and vices *behind this iron curtain* what can we know.'"[15] He goes on to state that after living in India for twenty-six years, "'of all the natives whom I have ever known, two or three fingers would cover the names of those whom I could venture conscientiously to recommend for.... Masonry.'"

How caste relates to Freemasonry and citizenship in a modern state will be treated in another chapter, but it is worth noting here that 19th-century Freemasons were keenly aware of the social implications of what they were about, and they jealously guarded their institution from what was perceived to be the contamination of caste attitudes. Ironically, though, many European Masons were not alert to their own racism, which thoroughly undermined the fundamental principle of Masonic brotherhood; or, if they were alert to it, justified it on the basis of Indian superstition, caste, or what was commonly called "character." Given the ideology of Freemasonry, however, Masons'

[15] In G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 179 (italics in original).

apprehensions regarding Hinduism as it was practiced in the mid-19th century (or understood to be practiced) were to some degree justified, regardless of these other motivations.

III. HINDU INITIATES IN BOMBAY PRIOR TO 1872

Before 1872, some Hindus of the Bombay Presidency, in their zeal to join Freemasonry, appear to have attempted individual redefinitions of their religious traditions which required playing fast and loose with the original tenets of their faith, but which were successful in getting them initiated.

In 1847, Bhugwandass Beeneeram, a twenty-one year old "Hindu," "professing the [Dhondia] Jain religion," sought admission into Lodge *Rising Star.* Beeneeram was a "partner in a big and respectable banking firm" in Ahmadnagar in the Central Provinces, and "was extremely anxious to become a Freemason and had come all the way from there to Bombay at considerable expense for that purpose."[16] *Rising Star* deemed itself—and seems to have convinced most European lodges—that it was the only lodge capable of properly investigating the character of, and initiating, Indians in Western India (even though, according to the Masonic Constitutions, any lodge was free to admit anyone it wanted). Thus, initiation had to be done in this lodge, even if the initiate was to join or affiliate to another lodge in his place of residence iater.

Beeneeram wrote out his application for initiation to *Rising Star* in Gujarati, which, translated into English, reads:

> I, Bhugwandass Beeneeram the undersigned earnestly represent that there are three divisions of tribes of the Jains: Switambari, Digambari and Dhondia tribes and that I am a member of the Dhondia tribe. That we of the Dhondia faith have no relation of any kind soever with either the Hindu faith or their Shastras but that our belief on the contrary is quite opposed to them. That we Dhondias are even distinct from other divisions, Switambari and Digambari, of the Jains and observe none of their ceremonial forms and adorations of images. That we of the Dhondia tribe save and except our Bhagwan (Supreme Being) the Lord of the Universe and

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[16] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 64.

> all that appertains to the same, animated and inanimated, recognize none less. We neither worship nor adore any image or object of any kind soever under any circumstances. Nor in our Thanuk (place of worship) walls we suffer any such thing to be worshipped or adored. Our Jutees (priests) when we gather in our Thanuk recite lectures on the good deeds of those who existed and departed from this world and descriptive of the moral code to guide us in our pursuits of life.... That human beings are endowed with the sense to know what is good and bad and that they will merit rewards and punishments in the world to come according to what they do in this. Believing in this we reckon all mankind to be equal and of one stock, be what their creed or caste, and love others as we would regard our own selves and under any circumstances not to destroy or injure any beings whether of human or brute creation. This is the sum total of our faith and to which I conscientiously adhere.... I solicit this admission neither at the solicitation of any one nor under any improper idea of any worldly expectation....[17]

Although the Dhondia Jains would have differed primarily in certain practices from the Digambaras and Svetambaras, like other Jains, they would have been atheistic at a theoretical level.[18] Yet Beeneeram described his sect as monotheistic. Conversely, Beeneeram was anxious not to be tainted by any connection to the Hindu religion or "their Shastras," for that would have implied that the Dhondias were polytheistic. Given the fuzzy notion Europeans (and even Parsis, it would seem) appear to have had about the difference between Jains and Hindus, it was prudent for him to reject Hinduism explicitly. Based on Beeneeram's re-interpretation of his religion—guaranteed to be palatable to those applying an Enlightenment grid to it—Dhondia Jainism, then, would surely have appeared as nothing other than some Indian version of Freemasonry! In reading Beeneeram's application letter, we can appreciate the power of the Enlightenment discourse to force Indians to use its standards and categorizations: all other discourses have been subjugated.

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[17] In Ibid., 65-66. Translator unknown.

[18] "Dhondia" appears to be another name for the *Sthanikavasi* sect of Jainism which broke from the *Svetambara* sect in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in 1473. The *Sthanikavasis* rejected the idolatry which had become a feature common to both *Svetambara* and *Digambara* Jains. Nevertheless, it would have been peculiar for any Jain to espouse Beeneeram's theism. See John Nicol Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publishers and Booksellers, 1967; first Indian edition; original published New York: Macmillan, 1915), 326. My thanks to Prof. P.S. Jaini of U.C. Berkeley's Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies for taking the time to explain the origin of the term "Dhondia" and also various aspects of Jain metaphysics to me.

In 1854, two "Hindoo gentlemen" were proposed for initiation in Lodge *Rising Star*, and "a discussion arose as to their eligibility so long as they adhered to those who professed polytheism." But the lodge members could not arrive at a decision, so the Master (Bro. O'Mealy), "with the concurrence of the brethren generally agreed to elicit the opinion of the Committee of the Provincial Grand Lodge."[19] Wadia does not record anything more on the matter, and the men seem not to have been initiated, for no Hindu names appear among the initiates of the lodge in that period.

In April 1860, according to the *Masonic Record for Western India*, a Brahmin named Mahadeo Narrayen, an Assistant Apothecary, was initiated in Lodge *Meridian*, a military lodge which was attached to H.M. 31st Foot, then posted at Poona.

> The Regiment being suddenly ordered away from the station, he was unable to obtain the other two Degrees. It appears that this brother, received into the body of our Institution in a just and lawful manner, and initiated as an E.A. [Entered Apprentice, or first degree] Freemason, applied for permission to visit another Lodge in Poona, but was denied admittance, on the score of his being a *heathen*. There being no District Grand Lodge at the time, the matter was referred to the *Freemasons' Magazine* [in London] by a correspondent, and the Editor gave it as his opinion that a person having been once admitted cannot be denied the right of visit to other Lodges on account of his religious persuasion.[20]

Without a specific ruling from a Grand or Provincial Grand Lodge overturning the practice of a local lodge, the opinion of the editor of even a major Masonic journal was, in the end, simply his opinion. This incident well illustrates the unreliability of military lodges as an effective instrument for the initiation of Indians. Moreover, it shows that the English Constitution's presence in the Bombay Presidency was still negligible, lacking even a District Grand Lodge.[21] Writing in 1865, George Bease, the editor of the *Masonic Record* made an open appeal to Narrayen wherever he might be:

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[19] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 97.

[20] *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May, 1865): 43 (editor's italics).

[21] A Provincial Grand Lodge of Bombay for English Masonry was formed in 1861, with four local lodges under it. By the time of this article, 1865, there were six English Constitution lodges in the Presidency. The total number of lodges under the United Grand Lodge of England was then about 400 worlwide. In 1865, the status and title of the Provincial Grand Lodge was changed to that of a District Grand Lodge,

> We believe Bro. Mahadeo Narrayen is now in Sind, and if he is still disposed to become an active member in Freemasonry, we would advise him to address himself to the Provincial Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge under England, who is one of the most liberal minded rulers of the Craft, and he may rest assured that his case will meet with every consideration.[22]

Bease was speaking of George Taylor, the Provincial Grand Master for the Provincial Grand Lodge (E.C.) of Bombay, which included Sindh at that time.[23]

In the *Masonic Record of Western India* for June 1865, the "Local" news section reveals: "We have heard from a reliable source that the subject of admitting Hindoos into our Order is to be mooted at the next meeting of Lodge *Concord* [E.C.]: the applicant for light is Mr. Hurrychund Chintamon."[24] However, shortly thereafter, Harichand Chintaman (also Chintamani)—a Sonar by caste[25]—was advised not to apply to *Concord*.[26] Since one of the Past Masters of *Concord* was the editor of the short-lived *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, Rev. J.J Farnham,[27] who took a dim view of initiating Hindus, the chances were high that Chintaman would have been rejected by Farnham's black ball alone. Why Chintaman did not proceed to one of the other English Constitution lodges in Bombay—there were six in the Bombay Presidency at that time,

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which conferred upon it some added powers—see K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961*, 13.

[22] *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May, 1865): 44.

[23] *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May, 1864): 43. In 1870, the District was defined as being bound by "the frontier of Sind from the sea to Kusmore, and a line drawn from Kusmore to Kishenghur, from Kishenghur to Jubbulpoor, from Jubbulpoor to the town of Armoree, and from Armoree to Honahwar"—in K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961*, pp. 13-14

[24] *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 3 (June, 1865): 107.

[25] Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 256. Sonars were traditionally crafters of gold and silver ornaments, "particularly for religious rituals," and setters of precious stones—Dobbin, 6-7.

[26] See *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 363.

[27] See *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol.2, no. 5, (Aug. 1865): 190. See "Hindoo Candidates for Masonry," in Farnham's *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 5 (August 1865): 67; and also "Constitutions and By-Laws," in *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 8 (November 1865): 135-36—"In this we cordially agree with our brethren at Calcutta. We are quite willing to allow Asiatics, if good men and true, to come among us, and enjoy the privileges of masonry. But we feel strongly, and we know that the better class of Natives sympathize with us, that the indiscriminate admission of Asiatics would be a great evil."

three of which were in Bombay City[28]—is unclear. There was also one "native" lodge in the Scottish Constitution—*Rising Star*—to which he might have applied.[29] Perhaps Chintaman recognized that the initiation of Hindus in Bombay was an idea whose time had not yet arrived. However, Chintaman would obtain initiation some years later in England,[30] and after that, he would figure in the early history of both the Theosophical Society in India[31] and the Arya Samaj in Bombay (formed 1875), of which he was the first head.[32]

At the March 3, 1866 Quarterly Communication [i.e., regular meeting] of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scottish Freemasonry in India, a letter was read from another Hindu, Shamrao Pandurang, Advocate of the Bombay High Court, requesting initiation into Freemasonry,

> which led to a prolongued discussion, as to the eligibility of Hindoos for admission to the order. It was held by one party, that Masonry recognized no distinction of caste and creed, and the only thing it did recognize, and require was an expression of a belief in one God, and in a state of reward, or punishment in after life, and therefore a Hindu declaring his belief in the above sense, would be perfectly eligible to be received into the Order. On the other part, it was argued that this was not quite sufficient in the case of a candidate belonging to a religion notoriously idolatrous, and to a society prone to persecute and excommunicate its members for the most trivial deviation from the usages and customs prevalent amongst them. It was considered absolutely necessary by those who knew Hindu society well, that any candidate from that community, must not be considered eligible who did not publicly renounce idolatry, or who objected to the fact of their becoming Masons being known before their initiation.[33]

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[28] See K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* (n.p., n.d., 1961?), 13.

[29] *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May, 1864): 44. The other S.C. lodge in Bombay City, *Perseverance*, did not initiate natives, although Poona's *St. Andrew in the East* might have been induced to do so.

[30] See "History of Lodge 'Islam' No. 27 G.L.I." (No publisher)—a souvenir on the occasion of the centenary of Lodge *Islam* on Nov. 20, 1976. Courtesy of Mr. Abid Baldiwalla, of Lodge *Islam*.

[31] For example, he corresponded with Madame Blavatsky and Captain Olcott while they were still in New York, and then he rented accommodations to them when they landed in Bombay in 1878 (until they discovered that he was overcharging them!).

[32] Chintaman appears to have been responsible for putting the Theosophical Society leaders in touch with Dayanand Saraswati, culminating in a merger of the two groups for a short while.

[33] In A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 82. The wording seems to be taken almost *verbatim* from the

The demand by the more hard-line faction that Hindu applicants publicly renounce idolatry and declare their intention to become Masons reflects not only the degree to which many Masons saw the Craft as pitted against orthodox Hinduism (as it was pitted against all "superstitious" sytems—including, especially, what many Masons perceived as the obscurantism of the Catholic Church's upper hierarchy), but also a desire both to advertise any triumph over such an enemy and to insure that defectors from Hinduism would not be able to backslide. In the end, the question "being so difficult" and as it "did not immediately concern the Prov. G. Lodge to come to a decision," Pandurang was referred to Lodge *Rising Star*. The decision not to decide not only reflects a desire to avoid having the Scottish Masonic community rent by controversy, but also suggests that the number of Hindus seeking admission into the Craft was as yet not great enough to justify a fight within the ranks of Masonry in Bombay. Also, the fact that the Provincial Grand Lodge was willing to let Lodge *Rising Star* deal with the matter may demonstrate less a willingness to let a consensus gradually percolate up from the local lodges, but a knowledge that the lodge would not admit a Hindu: Wadia, in his *History of Lodge Rising Star*, has no record indicating that Pandurang even approached the lodge in either 1866 or 1867. Based on his willingness to deal with the issue of Hindus in Freemasonry, Wadia would not have let such a historical event go unrecorded had it occurred.

The foregoing applicants—a financier, an apothecary, a High Court advocate, and assorted "gentlemen"—reflect the backgrounds that Masonry most often drew its members from—the new "middling" classes of professionals, and the gentry.

It was clear that the issue over admitting Hindus into Freemasonry was going to require some debate at the level of ideology in order to settle the matter once and for all, but it was also clear that the Masons of Bombay were not eager to do the debating. Instead, it was events transpiring in the English Constitution lodges of Bengal which were to prove decisive in removing the barriers to the initiation of Indians of all religious

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minutes of the meeting, as the spelling of "recognize" indicates an earlier spelling convention for British English than existed in the 1920s, when the book was written.

communities. This was reported and commented on in the Masonic press of Bombay at length, and influenced policy changes there. Therefore, the campaign of Bengali Hindus to enter Freemasonry must be looked at in detail.

IV. THE DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF BENGAL AND BY-LAW 55

Unlike the Scottish Constitution's Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India, which chose not to make a decision about initiating Hindus, but threw the matter squarely into *Rising Star's* lap (where nothing happened), the English Constitution's Provincial (later District) Grand Lodge of Bengal was not prone to vacillation, and took a firm stance, not only against initiating Hindus, but almost all Indians.

At first glance, it might appear strange that the decision of an English Constitution Provincial Grand Lodge would influence the policies of the Provincial Grand Lodge of a sister constitution in Bombay, or even the lodges of the same constitution in another Province. The fact that the English Constitution lodges of Bombay were fewer in number may have led to a natural reliance on the larger Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal.[34] As for the Scottish Constitution in Bombay, there is some indication that the Scottish and Irish Grand Lodges may have traditionally followed the lead of the English Grand Lodge, and this may have been replicated at the provincial level, as well.[35]

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[34] In 1864, the Bombay Presidency had 6 English Constitution lodges, and 8 Scottish Constitution lodges; the Bengal Presidency had 33 E.C. lodges and only 2 S.C. lodges; and the Madras Presidency had 9 E.C. lodges, one of which was a military lodge. Madras had no lodges under the Scottish or Irish banners. Indeed, the only Irish Constitution lodge in India at this time was Lodge *Sphinx* (No. 107), at Kandy in Ceylon. See "Freemasonry in India at the Present Time," in *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May, 1864), pp. 41-44. There was no Scottish Provincial Grand Lodge for Bengal or Madras at this time, nor would there ever be. The two Scottish Lodges in Bengal came under the direct authority of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in Edinburgh. See *The Masonic Register for India*, 96-97. In 1875, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India was transformed by the Grand Lodge of Scotland into the Grand Lodge of All-Scottish Freemasonry (G.L.A.S.F.I.) in India, its jurisdiction covered all of India, including Aden, "and the Territories adjacent thereto," and Ceylon. Although styled a Grand Lodge, G.L.A.S.F.I. was obligated to be subservient to and obey the Grand Lodge in Edinburgh. See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 103.

[35] In a discussion with an official in the Grand Lodge of India, which at the time was embroiled in a dispute with the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland, and Ireland, I was informed that it is customary for Scotland and Ireland to follow the lead of England in many matters. This may be connected with the fact that the first Grand Lodge was formed in England, which may have conferred a certain prestige upon it. This may

The person who pushed the doors of Freemasonry open to Hindus once and for all was Prosonno Coomar Dutt, the youngest son of Baboo Hurry Hur Dutt and the grandson of Baboo Tarra Chand Dutt. Born March 16, 1836, he was educated at Doveton College, and in 1863 he attempted to become a Freemason in Lodge *Courage with Humanity*, No. 392, E.C., in Calcutta.[36]

Unfortunately for Dutt, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal had a provision on its books, By-Law 55, which stipulated that: "No Mahomedan or other Asiatics shall be initiated in any Lodge without the previous sanction of the Provincial Grand Master."[37] The Master of *Courage with Humanity* therefore duly applied to the Provincial Grand Master regarding Dutt's initiation. The Provincial Grand Master at the time, Hugh David Sandeman (of the Bengal Civil Service)[38] refused to decide immediately because he wanted to put the matter to the Provincial Grand Lodge as a whole as to '"whether the admission of Hindus into Freemasonry is in consonance with the principles of the Order as inculcated by the Grand Lodge of England.'"[39]

> The meeting [i.e., a Quarterly Communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge] was held [on Sept. 22, 1863], at the end of which Sandeman concluded, according

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be why the Scottish Constitution Provincial Grand Lodge of India relied on the English Consitution's decision regarding the initiation of Hindus, even though it pioneered the admission of Parsis and Muslims in Bombay.

[36] Apparently, Dutt was not the only Hindu applying for initiation, but who the others were is not known. see *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May 1865): 43. See *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry and a Short Masonic Career of the First Hindu Mason* (Anonymous; Calcutta: Victor Printing Works, 1900), 1.

[37] Ibid., 1. At this time, the English Constitution called the overarching authority in Bengal a "Provincial Grand Lodge." At a meeting of Grand Lodge, London, on Dec. 6, 1865, it was decided that "Provincial Grand Masters and Provincial Grand Lodges in the colonies and foreign parts are designated District Grand Masters and District Grand Lodges, to distinguish such officers and such bodies from the Provincial Grand Masters and Provincial Grand Lodges at home." Moreover, due to their distance from England, and the consequent delay in communications, Grand Lodge decided that District Grand Lodges' powers "should be more extensive than those of Provincial Grand Lodges," including the powers of "investigating, regulating, and deciding on all matters relating to lodges and individual Masons within their respective districts." See *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 11, (February, 1866): 205-206.

[38] See "Masonic Landmarks in Bengal," in *Bengal Freemasons's Almanac*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 4 (July 1869): 148—"Hugh David Sandeman, Esq., of the Bengal Civil Service, appointed P.G.M. September, 3rd 1862, and afterwards, by a change in title, became the first District Grand Master of Bengal."

[39] *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 2.

> to the Minutes: "That Hindus were not eligible for admission into Masonry, and, further, that it was not desirable, with reference to social considerations, that they should be admitted, and so long as he held a veto under the By-Laws, he would exercise the power rigidly and with the utmost caution."[40]

After Sandeman stated his views, a vote was taken, and "the result was unfavorable for the admission of Hindus."

Undaunted, and believing that this decision violated the principles of Freemasonry, Dutt appealed above Sandeman's head six weeks later to the English Grand Lodge and the Grand Master himself, the second Earl of Zetland, K.G. (see Appendix A for the full text of correspondence and minutes regarding this), complaining that "by this arbitrary decision of the District Grand Master, I am excluded without recourse, while he enjoys all the privileges of Freemasonry. This I consider unfair and unjust in the extreme, and I humbly trust that your Lordship may take a similar view and revoke a decree that debars so many of the human race from an Order which professes to be open to all and to exclude no man on account of his religion."[41] Dutt further stated that "many of the highest Masons, and a moiety of the Brethren, were in favour of our admission, and it does not seem to me altogether right that the decision of a question of so much moment should depend upon the peculiar views or prejudices of a single individual." This indicates that a segment of the Masons supported Dutt in his goal, but, if the vote in the Provincial Grand Lodge was representative of the prevailing sentiment, the majority were clearly against letting Hindus in—it was not just one man's "peculiar views and prejudices."

In this letter, Dutt referred to an unnamed Hindu who, in July 1863, got as far as to be initiated before Sandeman caught wind of this and prohibited his further advancement on the grounds that the man was obligated on the Holy Bible and not on a Hindu sacred book.[42] Most Masonic scholars today seem to have forgotten that in June

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[40] Sandeman, in ibid., 2.

[41] Prosonno Coomar Dutt to Earl of Zetland, Grand Master, November 9, 1863. In *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May, 1865): 44-45.

[42] *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 4n.

1863, another Bengali Hindu, Kettermohun Ganguly, a vakil of the High Court, was admitted into Freemasonry in Bengal despite the strictures of By-Law 55. The initiation apparently happened because Sandeman was absent and the Provincial Grand Lodge was being administered temporarily by an officiating Provincial Grand Master. Writing in an editorial, in May, 1864, regarding the District Grand Lodge of Bengal's policy, George Bease referred to Ganguly in an attempt to demonstrate that Bengal had acted contradictorily:

> The question was lately decided against this race of Asiatics by a majority of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal, although only in June last a Hindoo gentleman, Mr. Kettermohun Gangooly, Vakeel of the High Court, was initiated in Lodge *St. John* at Calcutta [No. 486, E.C., founded 1842], after fully satisfying the Worshipful Master and Brethren of that Lodge that his religious belief was such as to entitle him to join the fraternity; the Officiating Provincial Grand Master was also satisfied, and granted a dispensation. We believe that about thirty years ago the first and only Hindoo who was initiated into the mysteries of Freemasonry at Calcutta made a similar declaration as the candidate who was lately initiated, and has proved true to his obligation.[43]

Unfortunately, Bease did not give the name of this earlier Hindu, who had been initiated in Calcutta in what would have been around 1834. Given the closeness in initiation times, though, Ganguly appears to be the unnamed Hindu whom Dutt referred to.[44] In a move to create a supporting precedent, Dutt, in his letter to Grand Lodge, quoted the declaration which Ganguly made in seeking to be admitted, saying that he was "quite ready" to take the same oath, namely, that

> I am not a Pantheist or a Polytheist. I do not identify my Creator with any one of his creatures. I believe in the existence of one Great Architect of the Universe, whose wish is the happiness of all his creatures, whose will is law, whose laws are impressed in the hearts of every right-thinking individual, and whose never-failing justice shall reach the transgressor of His laws on the Great Day of Judgment to come.[45]

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[43] *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May 1864): 46.

[44] See *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 364, where Bease prints the same oath which Dutt mentioned in his letter to Grand Lodge, and attributes it to Ganguly.

[45] Prosonno Coomar Dutt to Earl of Zetland, Grand Master, November 9, 1863. In *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May, 1865): 44-45.

It is worth looking at what doctrinal concessions—if any—such a declaration required of an orthodox Hindu. Clearly, any Hindu making such a declaration could be seen as subscribing to the *Dvaita*, or dualistic, type of Hindu theology.[46] The imagery of a "Great Day of Judgment," however, appears to derive wholly from Judeo-Christian eschatology. While it is on the surface reminiscent of Hindu expectations regarding the end of the *Kali Yuga*, when, according to *Vaishnava* prophecies, *Kalki Avatar* will come on a white horse "with a drawn sword blazing like a comet, for the final destruction of the wicked, the renovation of creation, and the restoration of purity,"[47] yet the Hindu apocalypse is not accompanied by a general resurrection of the dead, or their judgment. It would seem, then, that Hindus seeking admission into Masonry were being required to accept an eschatology foreign to their religion. It is possible, that an individual taking this oath could have interpreted this phrase loosely, simply as an immediate post-mortem judgment, which would not have been not incompatible with the notion of karma, or with a belief in going before the throne of *Yama*, lord and judge of the dead.

After saying that he would be willing to make the above declaration, however, Dutt—in a statement that would come to haunt him in the controversy which ensued—admitted that "[i]n common with a large number of my countrymen, I am, from social reasons, obliged to conform to caste rules, but I am not now, nor ever was, an idolator; and while Mussulmans, Jews, and Parsees are admitted, I complain that our exclusion is most unjust."[48] For Dutt, the ideological element in becoming a Mason—monotheism—was far easier to accede to than the social element—namely, the renunciation of the rules of his caste, which would have entailed the risk of excommunication.

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[46] This is the doctrine which posits an essential difference between God and creation, unlike the *Advaita*, or non-dualistic, philosophical school of Hinduism associated with Shankaracharya and *Vedanta*.

[47] John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History, and Literature* (Calcutta: Rupa Paperback, 1982; orig. publ. London: Trubner and Co., 1879), 38.

[48] Prosonno Coomar Dutt to Earl of Zetland, Grand Master, November 9, 1863. In *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May, 1865): 44-45.

In the same letter, Dutt also takes issue with the charge that there is no fitting Hindu text on which to obligate him. This refers to the objection that a true Hindu must necessarily be a casteman and a polytheist, and hence unworthy of admittance to Freemasonry, whereas any Hindu who rejects caste is no Hindu at all, and hence any obligation taken by him on a Hindu sacred book would be a farce: "The objection that we cannot be properly obligated is so weak a one as hardly deserves notice. Surely the oath on which our evidence is taken in Courts of Justice on matters of the gravest importance and which depend often on life or death, must be sufficient."[49]

In a response to Dutt, dated February 7, 1865,[50] the Grand Secretary in London, William Gray Clarke, began by apologizing for the long delay owing to the fact that

> letters had to be written to India and information had to be gathered from different sources, for until the receipt of your first letter of the 9th November 1863, the Grand Master was not aware that any objections had ever been raised against the initiation of any one who professed a belief in the Great Architect of Heaven and Earth and who was in other respects worthy to be admitted into the Order; and his Lordship was surprised to find that the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal had passed, and had acted upon, a prohibitory law. This law, however, has since been removed, and there is nothing, at least, in as far as the Grand Master can infer to prevent you or any other gentleman who believe in the one Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent God, and who in private life practice the sacred duties of morality from being initiated into the secrets and mysteries of our Order. It is, of course, to be understood, that each Private Lodge has its own rules respecting the admission or rejection of Candidates. With these By-Laws, provided they are not inconsistent with the general laws of the Order, the Grand Master cannot interfere.[51]

Clarke was simply re-stating the principle enunciated in the *Constitutions* that no higher body can infringe upon the right of a Lodge to accept or reject a candidate for initiation. It was on this principle that Grand Lodge demanded that the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal remove Provincial By-Law 55, whose existence Grand Lodge had only now

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[49] Ibid.

[50] The Grand Secretary replied with a short note in May 1864 stating that the delay had been due to being unable to decipher Dutt's signature, and having to use tracing paper to make it out. He said further that a fuller reply would be forthcoming.

[51] William Grey Clarke, Grand Secretary, to Prosonno Coomar Dutt, February 7, 1865. In *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 7 (October, 1865): 242.

become aware of—after a lapse of twenty-five years![52] News about the questionable by-law spread quickly, broadcast by the major organ of English Freemasonry. In its review of Masonry throughout the world for the year 1864, the *Freemasons' Magazine* of London stated, in its section on Asia, that

> Freemasonry has commenced to thrive in this quarter, especially in the British dominions, notwithstanding some incomprehensible false steps on the part of Masonic authorities. Thus, great excitement and indignation have been aroused in the Indian lodges, through a decree of the Provincial Grand Master of Bengal, by which natives are disqualified to be received within the Craft. In other parts of India, the natives muster rather strong in Masonic congregations—one of the Bombay lodges consists almost exclusively of Hindoos, especially Parsi.[53]

As we shall see, Clarke was mistaken in assuming that Grand Lodge's demand had resulted in the immediate erasure of By-Law 55 in Bengal.

According to an article in a Bombay Masonic journal, *The Indian Journal of Freemasonry* (Rev. J. Farnham, editor), for August 1865, which was borrowed from an earlier issue of the *Indian Freemason's Friend*, published in Calcutta (W.H. Hoff, editor), some parallel correspondence had also been carried on during this time between the Colonial Board of the Grand Lodge of England and the District Grand Lodge of Bengal. Intriguingly, the very existence of a Colonial Board seems to offer parallels with the Colonial Office of the British Government, which strengthens the notion that Freemasonry in the British Empire paralleled the institutional structures of the Empire and shared its personnel! According to the Colonial Board,

> While we are *unprepared* to say that men professing the religion of the Hindoo, believing in the Glorious Architect of Heaven and Earth, and practising the pure principle of morality, can be excluded from a participation in such mysteries and privileges, yet, *for the reasons we have expressed, great caution should be observed, and vigilant enquiries made to ascertain whether a candidate of the*

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[52] To be fair to the Provincial Grand Lodge, it appears that the original By-Laws and all revisions had been periodically sent to Grand Lodge, but that no one there had scrutinized them. See *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 1 (April 1865): 36-38.

[53] In *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 6 (September 1865): 211. Note the various uses of "Hindoo" to mean a member of a particular religion (which could include Jains), or, in the older, Persian manner, to refer to an Indian.

> *religion professed by the Hindoos is or is not a fit and proper person to become a Freemason....*
>
> The western conqueror, though he has exchanged the olive branch for the sword, is repelled at the outset by the impenetrable system of caste. While this remains the strongest outwork of the religious and social system of the Hindoos, it must not only be an almost insurmountable impediment to the access of true religion and enlightenment, *but also to the exercise of anything like the large-hearted Charity and Brotherhood between man and man.*[54]

The editor, Hoff, who printed this letter in his journal, referred damagingly to Dutt's own words in his letter to Grand Lodge that "'In common with a large number of my country, I am, from social reasons, *obliged to conform to certain caste rules.*'" "This requires no comment,"[55] concluded Hoff. Such statements regarding Hindu candidates and the caste system from the Colonial Board, a department of the Grand Lodge, would certainly have vindicated (as it did the editor of this Calcutta journal) those in the Provincial Grand Lodge who desired retaining the power to exclude Hindus and other Indians, rather than surrendering it to the individual lodges.

In the Spring of 1865, Hoff printed a letter to the *Indian Freemasons' Friend*, entitled "A Note of Interrogation," from a correspondent who signed himself only as "A Hindoo":

> Dear Sir,
>
> Will you kindly favour me with the solution of the following questions:—
>
> *1st.*—Was not Baboo Radda Nath Sikdar (a Native of Bengal) a Freemason? If otherwise so, how was he obligated before his initiation into the mysteries of Freemasonry; who was then the Provincial Grand Master of Bengal; by whom was he proposed and seconded; and in what Lodge?
>
> *2nd.*—Are the Parsees of Bombay pure Deists? If so, or otherwise, how do you obligate them before their initiation into your mysteries?

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[54] In *Indian Freemason's Friend* for March 1865. Quoted in *The Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 5 (August 1865) (Bombay: Messrs. Chesson & Woodhall, 1866; Rev. J. Farnham, editor): 67-68. Italics apparently by *I.F.F.*'s editor, W.H. Hoff. Hoff was Indian-born, and his father, John Jacob Louis Hoff (d. Jan. 20, 1866), had been Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Bengal, and later Past Grand Warden of England (see *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 10: 176-78). W.H. Hoff served as District Senior Grand Warden in Bengal's District Grand Lodge in 1866. See *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 12 (March 1866): 232. The President of the Colonial Board in 1865 was J.S.S. Hopwood, and the Board's address was Freemasons' Hall, London, clearly indicating that it was a department of Grand Lodge. As such, its opinion could be overridden by the Grand Master, which in the case of Hindus, it was. See the *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 11 (February, 1866): 207.

[55] Ibid.

> *3rd.*—When the Government appointed Baboo Sumbhoo Nath Pandit in the High Court, was he not properly obligated before he took his seat on the bench? then why cannot a Hindoo be made a Freemason by the same obligation?
>
> Yours faithfully,
> A HINDOO
>
> Colootolah, *8th March* 1865.[56]

Given the date of the letter, the issues raised, and the address of Colootolah, "A Hindu" appears to be none other than Prosonno Coomar Dutt, irked by the position Hoff had taken, and by his damaging reference to Dutt's words. In his "Interrogation," Dutt was clearly trying to embarrass Hoff, but the latter parried the thrust with a dismissive note:

> Radha Nath Sikdar was duly initiated, but where, when, and by whom we have no time to ascertain just now. Nor are we able to answer all the questions put by our correspondent. With regard to the Parsees, we refer him to a paper which appeared in our last issue. A Hindoo who is a pure Deist is eligible for admission into Masonry.—Ed, *I.F.F.*

In 1852, Lodge *Courage with Humanity*, No. 392 (E.C.) in Calcutta initiated one "Radanauth Sichdar."[57] G.E. Walker is confused about the name, thinking perhaps that it was a mishearing of the name "Raghunath Sirdar," with "Sirdar" being a title commonly used in Native States as an equivalent of "Esquire." On the other hand, he notes that "Sirdar" also was used to denote a cavalry troop-leader. Although "Raghunath" would normally be a Hindu's name, Walker, not being able to trace the Provincial Grand Master's dispensation allowing a Hindu to be initiated (which would have been necessary under Provincial By-Law 55), concludes that this initiate was probably a Hindu convert to Christianity who did not change his name. Yet, both "A Hindoo" and W.H. Hoff, writing only thirteen years after the initiation, assumed that the initiate was a Hindu, although neither appears to have known him, and the prefix "Baboo," which "A Hindoo" attached to Sikdar's name indicates that he was not a military person at all, but an educated Bengali. The most likely prospect, is that "Baboo Radda Nath Sikdar" was actually Radhanath Shikdar/Sikdar (born 1813), a prominent member of Henry Derozio's "Young

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[56] In *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 3 (June, 1865): 88. The issue of the *Indian Freemasons' Friend* must have been from between March and June 1865.

[57] G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 185-186n.

Bengal" movement of the first half of the 19th century.[58] If this is true, Sikdar would be the first Hindu Freemason in the records of the Bengal Presidency. What became of him in the Masonic world of Bengal is unclear, however.

Interestingly—given the "black or white" character of the debate over the admission of Hindus—Hoff, in his response to Dutt, took the position that a Hindu Deist would be eligible for initiation. This was not universally held by the Freemasons of Bengal (see below), but it does suggest that Brahmo Samajis would be seen by Hoff and other like-minded Masons as the most likely Hindu candidate-pool for Freemasonry.

Fortunately for Dutt, the Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland (r. 1844-70)[59], was firm in his support of Hindus to become Masons. As for the fifteen month delay in responding to Dutt mentioned by the Grand Secretary, in actual fact, the Grand Master had been contending with Sandeman over the related case of one Bro. Jordan, concerning By-Law 52, which stipulated that any appeals by an individual Mason or local lodge to Grand Lodge against the ruling of the Provincial Grand Lodge had to be communicated through the latter.[60]

Jordan was Master (ironically, as we shall see) of the *Lodge of Harmony*, No. 438, E.C., in Kanpur. He, like the Master of the lodge which Dutt had applied to, wrote to Sandeman requesting permission to initiate Prince Said-ud-Dowlah, whose father had been a "worthy Mason."[61] Sandeman refused. On the advice of three Past Masters of the Lodge, Jordan disregarded this refusal and proceeded to initiate the Prince anyway. Sandeman exerted his authority under By-Law 55 to bring the Past Masters and Jordan to

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[58] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 90; also, David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 161n.

[59] Zetland's Deputy at this time was Lord Ripon, who succeeded him as Grand Master in 1870.

[60] See G.E. Walker, 180. Sir Edward Ryan, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court *and* Senior Warden of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal, used to attend Derozio's *Academic Association* meetings. See *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 11 (February 1865): 406-08. Although Ryan left India in 1841, it is possible that Sikdar was initially attracted to Freemasonry through Ryan.

[61] See editorial, the *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May 1864): 47. Here is evidence for yet another early Muslim initiate, although his name is not given.

heel, but Jordan placed the Lodge in abeyance, and "made off with its warrant and books, which he refused to deliver up when ordered by the Provincial Grand Master."[62] The Provincial Grand Lodge unanimously sentenced Jordan to be "expelled" (i.e., excommunicated) from Freemasonry for his act of disobedience, and decreed that one of the Past Masters, Bro. O'Mealy, be suspended for one year.

These punishments were duly reported to Grand Lodge back in London, but Jordan and O'Mealy also appealed directly to Grand Lodge at the same time, thus compounding their violation of By-Law 55, and their disobedience towards a higher body, by violating Provincial By-Law 52.

Unfortunately for Sandeman, Grand Lodge's reply went completely against the Provincial Grand Lodge. By-Law 55, it stated, "'cannot be upheld or enforced; it is directly opposed to the spirit of our Institution and to the very words of the Antient Charges.... It is the privilege of a Lodge, *and one which cannot be interfered with*, to decide who it will receive - the required formalities... being duly observed.'"[63] Grand Lodge also stated that O'Mealy was right in his advice to Jordan and that the Grand Master "'directs that Bro. O'Mealy be forthwith reinstated.'" Moreover, if the case of Bro. Jordan were to come formally before Grand Lodge, his expulsion would be reversed, "'seeing that the offence charged against him in the first instance was his refusing to obey an illegal By-Law.'" Grand Lodge urged Sandeman to get the Provincial Grand Lodge to reverse its decision in order to forestall such a formal appeal. Moreover, the Grand Master stated that many of Bengal's By-Laws were "'contrary to and inconsistent with the laws and constitutions of Grand Lodge,'" and in another letter ordered that both By-Law 52 and 55 be struck out.[64]

Despite the Grand Master's unequivocal stance on these issues, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal insisted on appealing these decisions, and the minutes of the

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62 Ibid.

63 In G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 180-81.

64 Ibid.

meeting (held on June 24, 1865) to discuss this appeal have been recorded in full in an issue of the *Masonic Record of Western India*, which demonstrates the great importance the question of admitting Hindus had for Bombay's Freemasons. The June 24 meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal is important for showing how British Freemasons in India could be, and often were, men of their times and culture—afflicted by racial and religious prejudices—yet also how the Masonic principle of universal brotherhood could ultimately triumph within the Fraternity as a whole, at least in word and stated policy.

At that meeting, attended by over forty men, a motion by Bro. Roberts, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, was read, requesting: "That this Provincial Grand Lodge submit a respectful appeal, through the Provincial Grand Master, praying that Rule 55 be allowed to stand as a By-Law of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal." Roberts then supported his request by employing the familiar attack on the Indian "character," and also the argument that Hindus were caste-ridden, and hence could not possibly believe in universal brotherhood:

> Masonry was free, and it might be urged that no man of good character should be excluded from its privileges. But when Lodges were numerous, and the number of Members in each small, there might be a laxity in the investigation of the character of candidates; it was extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to arrive at anything like a correct opinion of the character of an Asiatic; *his mode of life and even his way of thinking, differed so widely from those of an European, that their characters were practically a sealed book.* An Asiatic morally excluded himself from Freemasonry, for how could he claim the right hand of fellowship with men whom he openly professes to scorn, and whose very touch is regarded by him as so contaminating, as to require ceremonies of ablution to obliterate? No one having a regard for the prejudices of caste, which made invidious distinctions of social position, between man and man, ought ever to be allowed to become a Mason, for Masons recognized no distinction between each other, save that of virtue and honour. There might be some few Natives perhaps who from long intercourse with Europeans had imbibed somewhat of our mode of thought and they might perhaps be admitted with very great caution, *but it was to be feared that as soon as it became the practice to admit Asiatics generally into our Lodges, we should have to witness a rapid decline of Masonry in Bengal.* He sincerely hoped that the Most Worshipful Grand Master would not force us to repeal this By-Law, and to inflict a great injury upon the Craft. It should be remembered that if any one Lodge (struggling perhaps for an existence) were to admit Asiatics, other Lodges could not refuse to receive them as visitors; it was

> therefore a most important question affecting the Craft at large, and some one should be competent to decide who should and who should not be admitted, and as this might be a dangerous power to give to a private Lodge, was it not better to entrust that power to the Provincial Grand Master? He begged to move therefore that the Grand Master be solicited to allow the By-Law, No. 55, to stand.[65]

For Roberts, "Asiatics," and not just Hindus, were afflicted with caste and ritual impurity laws, and both were represented in terms of a complete "Other." The "visitor" question was also of great concern to Bengal's Masons, indicating that they felt compelled to admit into their lodges any visitor who had been duly initiated as a Mason, in contrast to the members of the Poona lodge who had refused entry to Mahadeo Narrayen in 1860 due to his being a "heathen" (see above).

Following Roberts, Bro. Fenn took a more extreme and racist position, arguing that:

> ...no one except those resident in India could form any correct idea of the Asiatic character; *their thoughts were not our thoughts, nor their ways our ways.* If in England they knew as much of the Asiatic as we did they would never think of forcing us to repeal this By-Law. *We never could know the Asiatic intimately, there was a wide and impassable gulph* [sic] *between us which nothing could bridge over.* Men, though of the same blood, were not all alike, the word 'man' did not always bear the same signification; there were various races, various ranks and walks in life, and *our race differed in every essential point from that of the Asiatic, so that we could never meet as Brothers.* Of this they were in England totally ignorant. Even the Mahomedans of India were not Mahomedans according to the tenets of the Koran; many of them were idolators, and by the Turkish and Persian Mahomedans were scorned and despised as such....[66]

For Fenn, it was a case of "East is East, and West is West; and never the twain shall meet," as Kipling was to write later on. Intriguingly, Fenn's notion of race prefigured the scientific racism of the late 19th century. However, unlike Kipling (who was born around the time of this controversy, and who would later become a Mason), Fenn seemed unwilling to believe that "there is neither border, nor breed, nor birth, when two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth." Instead,

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[65] *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 2, no. 6: 236-37. (Italics mine.)
[66] Ibid.: 237. (Italics mine)

he dismissed all Hindus and Indian Muslims as idolaters.[67] This was a neat attempt to strengthen the rationale for the exclusion of Indians Muslims, even if Turks and Persians were to be allowed in.

To be fair to Fenn, however, his argument about the essential difference of Indians and Europeans had been used earlier by the Bengal British Indian Association member, Peary Chand Mitter—an Indian—at a large public meeting in Calcutta, held on July 25, 1853 to protest the Government of India's rejection of various of the Association's demands, including one for a representative Legislature. In attempting to demonstrate why Indians alone could "'know and report the sentiments of the community correctly,'"[68] he stated that there was no "communion of feeling" between Europeans and Indians, and maintained that "it was impossible for the former to know the thoughts and feelings of the latter."[69] The notion of essential Otherness could be used in support of very different ends, indeed!

Next, Bro. Abbott, who "had spoken before on this subject very strongly," developed the theme of the essential "otherness" of the Asiatic, declared that he

> *did not consider an Asiatic to be of our kind, and would never sit in Lodge with him*; it was all very well to endeavour to fraternize with natives in the outward world, but even this was impossible. Such an attempt had been made some ten years since when a number of the leading Civilians got up the 'Union' Club, to which Europeans and Asiatics might both resort; the experiment however failed, for it was found impossible to amalgamate such opposite extremes, and the Club, instead of being called the 'Union,' speedily acquired the nick name of 'Oil and Water,' two liquids which never could be mixed together. *The Asiatic neither could nor would conform to our habits or tastes, they could not associate with us in Lodge without contamination in their own eyes, nor could they join us at the*

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[67] In a P.G.L. Committee meeting on Dec. 4, 1864, Fenn stated that "the Constitutions, which referred to Christian Masonry in a Christian country, did not forbid the adoption of extraordinary precautions in a distant colony in the admission into the Craft of men who were not Christians. In attempting to place on the same footing Christian candidates for initiation and Asiatic candidates, the good people in England showed some of that ignorance which appeared, until the Sepoy Mutiny, in their belief in the 'mild Hindoo.'"—in *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 2, no. 1 (April 1865): 38.

[68] In Bimanbehari Majumdar, *Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature (1818-1917)*, (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1965), 62.

[69] Ibid.

> *Banquet Table.*[70] The idea of admitting such men into Lodges was utterly abhorrent to his (Bro. Abbott's) feelings, and he should always protest against it.[71]

The assertion about Hindus being defiled merely by sitting in Lodge with Europeans compels one to question Abbott's reasoning, for why then would Hindus even seek admission in Freemasonry! (It is true that such defilement could be expunged ritually, but to go through this ritual once a month—the normal frequency of lodge meetings—would probably have seemed to onerous to prospective candidates.)

Bro. W. J. Judge, who followed Abbott to speak, opposed the motion to keep By-Law 55, because although "he had no hesitation in saying that he did not know one Native whom he would accept into Masonry,"[72] nevertheless, the investigation into a Native's character "were matters which the Lodge was competent to deal with, and with the greatest respect for our present Provincial Grand Master, he must say he saw no reason why a Lodge might not be permitted to decide all these questions for itself." While this appears to be an appeal for restoring the autonomy of daughter lodges based on a strict reading of the *Constitutions* rather than any desire to see Indians enter Freemasonry, one wonders if Judge was not using constitutionalism to avoid being considered an Indian-lover, especially after what had been said by the previous speakers.

The first real opposition to the racial and religious prejudice of the other speakers was offered by Bro. Swinhoe, who thought By-Law 55 to be "very indefinite." He commenced with a casuistic attempt to define the term "Asiatic" and ended with an appeal to the spirit of liberty contained in Anderson's *Constitutions*:

> Who were Asiatics? Did it refer to all men *born* in Asia, such as the Armenians, Parsees, and those of mixed blood, or even of European parents in India? Were the By-Laws so modified as to refer to idolators only, it would be consistent with the spirit of the Constitutions, now it was opposed to them in spirit and in letter. A private Lodge could exclude any man by the proper use of the Ballot, and it was

[70] Although the lodge banquest is not formally a part of Masonic ritual, it is an established custom which follows the lodge meeting, and it represents the high-point in Masonic sociability. Along the same lines as the Union Club, in Madras the Cosmopolitan Club would be opened in October 1873 "for Native as well as European gentlemen." See *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 10, no. 8 (Nov. 1873): 299.

[71] *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 2, no. 6: 237. (Italics mine.)

[72] Ibid.

> an infringement upon the Liberty of a Lodge to have to submit such a question to the Provincial Grand Master.[73]

Another Provincial Grand Lodge member, Bro. Davis, addressed the issue from the point of universal brotherhood, asserting that he thought "that Bro. Roberts had ignored the fundamental rules of Masonry, for we were taught by it to view every son of Adam as a Brother of the dust; why then should we admit such men as the Rajah of Kuppurthalla and Dhulleep Singh, and exclude others? It was time to get rid of such flimsy distinctions between man and man and act on the broad basis of universal Masonry."[74] This was clearly a jibe at the Provincial Grand Master, Sandeman, who had been responsible for the initiation of these "royal" Asiatics. Why Davis did not bring up the more relevant initiation in lodge *St. John* of the Hindu High Court vakil, Kettermohun Gangooly, only two Junes before, is a mystery. Perhaps it was because the initiation was carried out under the dispensation of an officiating Provincial Grand Master, while Sandeman was away. Sandeman would have been unable to reverse this decision upon his return, and while it set a precedent for the Provincial Grand Lodge, it did not set one for the Provincial Grand Master. Sandeman, though, must surely have appreciated that such an event weakened the ability to exclude Hindus altogether (just as he now recognized that Muslims could no longer be barred outright—see below), which was all the more reason for Sandeman to want to keep in his own hands the power conferred upon him by By-Law 55.

Sandeman spoke next, demonstrating his resourcefulness in interpreting Grand Lodge's decision such that By-Law 55 would still remain in effect informally, even if the appeal against its being stricken were to fail. He raised, as well, the bogey of the 1857 Mutiny, which was still fresh in the minds Britons in India. At the end, he responded to Davis' charge of hypocrisy:

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.: 238.

> [T]he repeal of the By-Law did not involve the forced admission of Hindoos into Freemasonry. The Grand Master had not ordered this, and he trusted that such an order would never be given. In the absence of such an order he would absolutely forbid initiations, *not on the ground of the 55th By-Law being illegal, but because a Hindoo was an idolator, and therefore ineligible for the mysteries of the Craft.* His power, therefore, in this respect, was not affected by the repeal of the By-Law, *but he regretted that his power to exclude Mahomedans would be lessened....* W. Bro. Roberts had stated that it was only by long intercourse with Europeans that Asiatics could become fitted to receive the light of Masonry, but he would warn Grand Lodge that *many of those who were the most intimate with Europeans had proved the worst, as witness the case of the infamous Nana, and of his colleague Azeemoollah, who had both been the constant associates of Europeans, were acquainted with their habits, and professed immutable friendship towards them.* The Mahomedans of India were undoubtedly far from being true Mahomedans. They would not eat with the Christian with whom they were enjoined [by the Qur'an] to eat, whereas they were in the habit of eating from the hands of the Hindoo, which was forbidden in their Koran. W. Bro. Davis had been singularly infelicitous in his allusion to the Maharajah Dhulleep Singh and the Rajah of Kuppurthalla. Both these noblemen were professing Christians, and were at once an ornament to their own race and to the Order of Freemasons.[75]

Sandeman's dismissal of the case of Dhuleep Singh and the Raja of Kapurthala on the basis of their conversion to Christianity must have appeared disingenuous to at least some of his fellow Provincial Grand Lodge members, for at the initiation of Dhuleep Singh in Lodge *Star in the East*, in March 1861, Sandeman stated that:

> .... while Duleep Singh had been admitted .... in Calcutta, another Lodge ... had lately witnessed ... the initiation of a Mohammedan nobleman, while the Rajah of Kapurthala and his brother Bikram Singh were about to join our Order at Lahore. He was also glad to see as a guest... his noble Brother the Nawab Zulaladin.... Were not these... ample and convincing proofs that Freemasonry is not an institution for any particular sea or nation or for any one country or religion? And was it not a pleasing thing to know and to feel that there does exist in this world at least one Society where, whatever might be the feelings of race, all could meet as brothers descended from one common parent....[76]

Here, Sandeman mentioned the initiation of a Muslim nobleman and the presence of another Muslim nobleman and Masonic brother, Nawab Zulaladin. Nawab Zulaladin was most likely "Prince Mahomed Julal-ood-deen, of the Tippoo family, a member of one of the Calcutta Lodges," whose death was announced in the *Masonic Record* of April

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[75] Ibid. (Italics mine.)

[76] Sandeman, in G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 181.

1864.[77] Sandeman's statement that Freemasonry was not an institution for any one religion and his warm acknowledgment of a Muslim Prince as a "brother" are truly strange, given his statements in 1865. Perhaps noble blood, even more than conversion to Christianity, was Sandeman's chief criterion for judging worthy character and, thus, the admissibility of Indians. Clearly, Sandeman was both elitist and contradictory, for he had vowed to keep Asiatics—by which he meant Muslims, as well as Hindus—out of the Craft "as long as he held a veto under the By-laws...."[78]

Not surprisingly, given the sentiments voiced above, the vote appealing Grand Lodge's decision was carried by an overwhelming 28 to 5. On September 23, 1865, the Grand Secretary wrote to Sandeman regarding the June 24, 1865 meeting:

> As regards the initiation of Mahomedans and other Asiatics, the Grand Master feels bound to adhere to the opinion he has already formed on the subject, and which has been communicated to you.
>
> Every Private Lodge has the undoubted right to decide for itself whom it will admit provided the ancient landmarks and the laws of the Grand Lodge are not infringed. In one of the ancient charges it is expressly stated that 'Let a man's religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the Order provided he believes in the Glorious Architect of Heaven and Earth and practises the sacred duties of morality.' The Grand Master cannot alter that rule, neither can he sanction any subordinate authority enacting a rule, compelling a Lodge to ignore it. And, it must be observed that, although a District or Provincial Grand Lodge has the power to frame laws for its own government, it is simply authorized to make a regulation for the guidance, not the government, of the Private Lodges in the District.
>
> If you will have the goodness to send a fair and corrected copy of the By-Laws, the Grand Master will affix his signature to, and notify his approval of, the same.[79]

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[77] *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 1 (April 1864): 40. This news item was probably culled from Hoff's *Indian Freemasons' Friend.*

[78] Sandeman, in G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 181.

[79] William Gray-Clarke to Hugh Sandeman, Sept. 23, 1865. In the *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 12 (March 1866): 476. Strangely, the version of this letter in *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 9-10, begins the relevant paragraph with "As regards the initiation of Hindus or other Asiatics,...," not "... the initiation of Mahomedans and other Asiatics." In any case, the point is forcefully made by Grand Lodge that religion shall not debar a man's initiation into Freemasonry. Knowing Bease' attention to detail, the version presented in his periodical is probably the more accurate.

Grand Lodge's demand for a revised copy of the By-Laws was a clear attempt to end Bengal's temporizing. Sandeman officially conceded defeat at a Quarterly Communication of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal on December 27, 1865. After the Grand Secretary's letter was read requiring "the erasure of Rules 52 and 55 in the revised By-Laws of the District Grand Lodge,"[80] he announced briefly and matter-of-factly: "The Communication from the Grand Secretary of England, referred to in the 4th paragraph of the *Agenda* paper, disposes finally of the question of our By-Laws, and I have consequently transmitted to England a revised set, as passed by this District Grand Lodge at their Quarterly Communication of June last, for the signature of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland."[81]

Prior to this, Dutt had gotten hold of the minutes of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal's June 24, 1865 meeting, and seems to have been stung by various of the views expressed there. He wrote to the Grand Secretary about this. Clarke replied on October 19, 1865:

> As regards expressions made use of by certain Brethren at a meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal to which you allude, you must please distinctly understand that although the Most Worshipful Grand Master declared that it was illegal to have a By-Law prohibiting Lodges from initiating Hindus and other Asiatics, His Lordship did not intend, and indeed he has no power, to interfere with the individual feelings or opinions of any members of the Order, nor with any decision a Lodge might come to upon a ballot. Every member of a Masonic Lodge has a perfect right to vote against the admission of any Candidate whose admission would, in his opinion, be disadvantageous to the welfare and harmony of his Lodge. This is a matter beyond the Grand Master's control, and on[e] that it would be very undesirable to interfere with.[82]

Dutt, who probably received this in January 1866, sent a copy to Sandeman. He got no reply. The reason was simple: after the rejection of the Provincial Grand Lodge's appeal to Grand Lodge, Sandeman tried to keep the object of By-Law 55—the practical

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80 *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 12 (March 1866): 475.

81 *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 12 (March 1866): 439.

82 William Gray-Clarke to Prosonno Coomar Dutt, Oct. 19, 1865. In *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 7-8.

exclusion of Indians from the Craft—at least partly in force by decreeing that no form of oath was binding on a Hindu.[83] Dutt then wrote to Grand Lodge asking again if a Hindu could be obligated using the same oath employed in being made a Judge of the High Court, or a member of the Viceroy's Council. The Grand Secretary responded: "I have his Lordship's commands to say that in his opinion, but without prescribing any set form of words, the obligation should be such as would be binding on the conscience of the Candidate, and such as the particular forms and trusts of his religious persuasion would be required on other occasions, where a binding obligation was required."[84]

This did not result in Dutt's initiation, however, for we find a letter from him dated March 22, 1867 being read at the June 29, 1867 Quarterly Communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (S.C.) "intimating that he had made unsuccessful applications to be initiated into the Craft in one of the English Lodges in the Bengal Presidency. Forwarding also a copy of the correspondence between the Grand Secretary of England and himself relative to the above, and requesting the opinion of the P.G. Lodge thereon. This letter was referred to the Standing Committee."[85] One wonders if Dutt was contemplating becoming a Mason under the Scottish banner in Bombay, and was first trying to sound out the P.G.L. as to his chances before making a long trip across India. Or was he simply trying to add the P.G.L.'s judgment to his collection of letters from Grand Lodge? In any case, Dutt's effort was in vain, for no report of the Standing Committee exists on this subject in the Minutes of the next few Quarterly Communications.

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[83] G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 181. Sandeman had threatened as well to exclude Hindus because they were idolaters. In Dutt's case, this may not have worked, since he was willing to make Ganguly's declaration abjuring polytheism, and Grand Lodge had said this was sufficient. But the notion that no oath was binding on a Hindu could not have been used against Dutt either, since he had a letter from Grand Lodge to the contrary.

[84] William Gray Clarke to Prosonno Coomar Dutt, June 28, 1866, in *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 11.

[85] *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 4 (July 1867): 147.

In 1869, Dutt added to his portfolio letters from Lord Mayo, the Viceroy (r. 1869-72), and a Mason; Lord Dalhousie, the Grand Master of the Scottish Constitution; and the Duke of Leinster, Grand Master of the Irish Constitution. Lords Mayo and Leinster lent full support to the Grand Lodge of England's decision that one's non-Christian religion was not a bar to Masonic membership, while nevertheless upholding the right of a lodge not to be compelled to admit a Candidate,[86] but Dalhousie—no doubt worried that any response supporting Dutt might be rubbed in Sandeman's face or given to the press—diplomatically refused an opinion, saying only that the Grand Lodge of Scotland "'cannot interfere in any way with the views of the Grand Lodge of England on this or any other matter. Had you applied to a Lodge, holding under the Grand Lodge of Scotland, for initiation, and they had found difficulty as to duly obligating you, the Grand Lodge of Scotland would have been ready to advise their Brethren in India as to the point.'"[87] What that advice would be, he did not say.

The reason initiation into Freemasonry continued to elude Dutt in Bengal was "owing to no Lodge under the District Grand Lodge of Bengal daring to propose Mr. Dutt as a candidate... for fear of being subject to [the] displeasure of the then District Grand Master... Hugh David Sandeman."[88] Sandeman clearly intended to maintain control over the entry of Indians into the Craft, by-laws or no. For example, a letter dated February 19, 1869 from the District Grand Master was read at the March meeting of Lodge *Hope and Perseverance* in Calcutta "sanctioning the initiation of Mr. Mohamed Hayat Khan, Extra Assistant Commissioner."[89] While Sandeman, by countenancing this initiation, appears to have softened a bit in his stance towards Indians (at least towards one Muslim), how he managed to continue exercising such control in the face of Grand

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[86] Mayo and Leinster, in *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 12 and 14.
[87] Dalhousie, in ibid., 13.
[88] *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 67n.
[89] Minutes for March 1, 1869, Lodge *Hope and Perseverance*, No. 782, E.C., Calcutta; in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 2 (May 1869): 73.

Lodge's ruling is unclear. Perhaps it was an informal control based on intimidation, as the above quote states.

Dutt's perseverance certainly exceeded that of Maneckji Cursetji, who had struggled to open the doors of Freemasonry to Indians in the Bombay Presidency. When rejected in Bombay, Cursetji simply got initiated in France, and when he returned he had the support of many Masons—including the Provincial Grand Master, James Burnes—to found a new lodge that would accept him and other Indians. Dutt, on the other hand, fought a protracted battle against an entrenched majority of Masons in Bengal which was determined not to let its superior body in England undo its policies—policies which were informed by racial and religious bigotry, albeit admixed with some valid ideological concerns.[90] Dutt's tenacity reflects a keen sense of injustice at being discriminated against, and the will to right this wrong. Beyond the confines of Masonry, racism was endemic in the British power structure in Bengal, but Freemasonry was the one institution which offered any opportunity for social equality with Europeans—many of them important members of that power structure. Even conversion to Christianity rarely conferred equal status upon Indians, or drew the respect of European Christians. Other motivations notwithstanding, the conquered could not but perceive in Freemasonry the chance to close the gap between themselves and their conquerors. The question of admission for Indians, and Hindus especially, was therefore "a matter of deep interest and importance to very many of my countrymen," as Dutt put it.[91]

Given the power of a single individual in any lodge to cast a black ball against a candidate, thus invalidating his admission, and given the overwhelming feeling of Bengal's Masons—led by Sandeman—against the admission of Hindus, Dutt's wait to be initiated could have gone on forever. But if a lodge broke ranks, Sandeman would have had no power to discipline it, now that Grand Lodge had forbidden him from doing so.

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[90] This affair reminds one of the Ilbert Bill controversy of the 1880s, and perhaps it is no coincidence that the Viceroy then was the Deputy Grand Master at this time (and later, Grand Master): Lord Ripon.
[91] P.C. Dutt to Grand Lodge of England, November 9, 1863; in *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 2 (May 1865): 44-45.

That lodge was *Anchor and Hope*, No. 234, E.C., in Calcutta, which, on June 13, 1872, initiated Prosonno Coomar Dutt into Freemasonry.[92] This act meant that the members of *Anchor and Hope* had decided *en masse* to adhere to Grand Lodge's ruling, to resist Sandeman's pressure, and to confront him over his persistent violation of the fundamental Masonic principle of brotherhood. On July 11, 1872, Dutt was passed to the second degree, and raised to the degree of Master on August 22 of the same year. At the December 1872 Quarterly Communication of the District Grand Lodge, Sandeman indicated his intention to resign (after ten years as District Grand Master), as he was planning to leave India for Europe in early 1873.[93] One wonders whether or not, at some level, Sandeman thought that there wasn't room in the District for both him and Dutt, and felt humiliated by the *babu* who had beaten him. In December 1873, Dutt was elected Master of his lodge—the first Hindu Master of a lodge in the annals of Freemasonry.[94] By 1876, he was also serving as an officer in the very District Grand Lodge which had tried so ardently to keep him from being initiated at all. In 1895, he was Deputy District Grand Master—the second most important office in the District.[95]

Through the tireless efforts of P.C. Dutt the barrier to the admission of Hindus was *constitutionally* removed in Bengal in 1865. Yet, it was not Grand Lodge's rulings (although they did clear the path), but rather the Masonic convictions of the members of a

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[92] In South India, British Masons applied the verdict of the Grand Lodge of England more quickly than did the Bengal DGL. In the minutes for an emergency meeting of Lodge *Bangalore*, No. 1043, E.C., on August 23, 1869, we read: "Before proceeding to the business for which the meeting was convened, the W.M. [i.e., Master J.J. Franklin] made a few remarks with regard to the initiation of Hindoos. He stated that according to the constitutions and instructions communicated by the Grand Lodge of England to the District Grand Lodge of Calcutta, there was no objection to the initiation of Hindoos, provided they believed in One Supreme Being, and practised the sacred duties of morality. Steps had been taken to ascertain the candidate's belief. His moral character was irreproachable. The brethren then proceeded to ballot for Mr. Vijayendra Rao, Assistant Superintendant Mysore Commission, who had been proposed by Bro. Nepean Smith, and seconded by Bro. [R.] Mullen, as a fit and proper person for admission into the mysteries and privileges of ancient Freemasonry.... The ballot proved clear"—in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 7 (October 1869): 266-67.

[93] *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 426.

[94] See *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 16.

[95] See G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 181. Dutt's first District Grand Lodge office was that of Grand Standard Bearer, in 1874. He also held other District offices between then and 1895. Dutt also became the editor of the *Indian Freemasons' Almanac and Diary*, a Masonic journal.

Bengal lodge which, in the end, *actually* opened the doors of Freemasonry to Hindus. Now that the Presidency most opposed to initiating Hindus had relented on this issue, the struggle of Hindus in Bombay to gain admission into the Craft was to be a downhill one.

V. HINDUS GAIN ADMITTANCE IN BOMBAY

Whereas in 1844 the Scottish Constitution's Provincial Grand Lodge had pioneered the systematic initation into Freemasonry of Indians other than Hindus, it was to be the English Constitution's District Grand Lodge of Bombay, three decades later, which would take the lead in initiating Hindus—the most numerous of all Indians. This was especially ironic, since the District Grand Lodge of Bengal (E.C.) had striven successfully for roughly three decades to *avoid* the initiation of Indians of any community.[96]

In 1865, Harichand Chintaman had attempted unsuccessfully to be initiated in the English Constitution's Lodge *Concord* in Bombay. He then waited another six years until he went to England, to be initiated there. A little after his return at the end of 1871, the *Masonic Record* announced:

> We notice the return to Bombay of a well known native citizen, Hurrychund Chintamon, who has spent a few months in England picking up useful information. Bro. Hurrychund Chintamon was intiated into Freemasonry in Lodge Harmony, No. 255 [England, presumably], passed in *St. John's* Lodge, No. 167, and raised in *Royal York* Lodge, No. 7, and will doubtless be glad to join a Lodge in this country. So seldom have we to chronicle the admission of an educated Hindu into the circle of our sacred and mysterious rites and ceremonies, that we are glad to do so on this occasion."[97]

Bease made it seem as if there would be no problem in Chintaman's gaining admission into a local lodge, since he was now a Master Mason. Considering Bengal's Masons' enduring attitude towards Grand Lodge where Indians and Hindus were concerned, many Masons in Bombay probably suspected that Chintaman's initiation in

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[96] See Chapter 2 for John Grant's response to a ruling by the English Grand Lodge in the 1840s to place no special barriers on the initiation of Hindus and Muslims.

[97] See *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 10 (January 1872): 362

the less strict environment of England was an attempt to circumvent the more rigorous and less naive Masonic community of India. Thus, even Chintaman's return as a Master Mason would not necessarily have reassured anyone. In 1872, Chintaman sought admittance into the Scottish Constitution's Lodge *Rising Star* as a visitor. "As on the ground of their being polytheists—and not monotheists—the Hindus were not taken in the Order, a discussion arose but ultimately the Worshipful Master [Darasha R. Chichgur] admitted the Brother as he belonged to a regularly constituted lodge of Masons in England and also held a certificate from the Grand Lodge."[98] In January 1873, Bease wrote that Chintaman "is now heartily welcomed in all the Lodges in Bombay."[99]

In late 1872, a few months after Prosonno Coomar Dutt was initiated in an English Constitution lodge in Calcutta, four Hindus sought initiation in the English Constitution's Lodge *Cyrus* in Bombay. They were slated to be initated in late December 1872. When D.R. Chichgur, the Master of *Rising Star*, caught wind of this, he consulted with "many of the oldest members" of the lodge and immediately dashed off a letter to *Cyrus'* Master, J.N. Dady, in an attempt to dissuade him from taking "any hasty step in a matter which requires to be carefully arranged and systematically put through."[100] Chichgur described how the subject of admitting Hindus into Freemasonry

> has been very frequently discussed without any definite result. Very great and careful consideration has at all times been paid to this important question by individual Lodges, and it has been viewed in the most favourable light possible, but the conclusions arrived at, by each body, was that no methodical or systematic rules could be laid down by one particular Lodge how and in what manner Hindus could be admitted into Freemasonry, and each Lodge thought that such a question could not be settled by one single Lodge but by all the Lodges meeting on this side of Western India.[101]

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[98] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 186.
[99] *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 363.
[100] D.R. Chichgur to J.N. Dady, Esq., 18 December 1872. In D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 409 (Appendix O: 408-10).
[101] D.R. Chichgur to J.N. Dady, in ibid, 408-09. Note the consciousness of a global Masonic community!

While acknowledging that if Freemasonry spread among the Hindus it would create a "social revolution," and "melt away" the caste prejudices which "grind down the Hindus," Chichgur nevertheless argued that it "would be better if you were to hold a conference with your sister Lodges, both English and Scotch, and there discuss this subject which, as it does, affects the interest of every Freemason throughout the globe."[102]

The plea fell on deaf ears, and five days later, on Dec. 23, 1872, Lodge *Cyrus* initiated the four Hindus—Saraswat Brahmins by caste—and shortly thereafter a fifth: Bal Mangesh Wagle, an Advocate of the High Court; Shantaram Narayan Bondsay, Vakil of the High Court; Ganasham Nilkanth Nadkarni, Vakil of the High Court; Shantaram Withal Sanzgiri, Physician; and Vishnoo Ganasham Sukuthanker, Vakil of the High Court.[103]

It is unclear why J.N. Dady did not follow Chichgur's advice to hold a Masonic convention in Western India to decide the matter of Hindus. Given the intensity of feeling over the issue, it was unlikely that Dady would have gone ahead with the initiation of the four Hindus without the support of James Gibbs, the District Grand Master (E.C.). Bease, in the *Masonic Record*, after praising Dady "in thus taking the lead in breaking through a barrier which at one time seemed most formidable to the admission of Hindoos into Freemasonry," [104] states that "prejudice we know is very strong on the subject, and it was only after taking the advice of the R.W. District Grand Master, that the brethren of Lodge *Cyrus* consented to receive the candidates in their Lodge, particularly after the candid declaration made by them of their belief in the One True God." A few months later, at the District Grand Lodge meeting March 1863, Gibbs praised the event:

> The District Grand Master observed that a remarkable event had occurred since the District Grand Lodge last met, viz., the initiation into Masonry of four

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[102] D.R. Chichgur to J.N. Dady, in ibid., 409.

[103] See Minutes of Lodge *Cyrus*, No. 1359 (E.C.) for meeting held on 23rd December 1872. In *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 364. The fifth person could not attend the Dec. 23 meeting and was initiated at an "Emergent" meeting later.

[104] *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 363.

> Hindoo Gentlemen of high position and character. The admittance of Hindoos into the Order had been in his mind for many years, but there had been difficulties in the way; those difficulties had now been removed, and the time had come when no Brother could object on the ground that their initiation was unconstitutional. He hoped that those Hindoos who had now come forward would be followed by others of their stamp, as he firmly believed that Freemasonry would prove a great benefit to the people of India.[105]

James Gibbs in Bombay and Hugh Sandeman in Calcutta were indeed polar opposites in their views of Indians, and especially Hindus! No doubt Dady would have immediately told Gibbs of Chichgur's appeal for a Scottish and English joint decision regarding Hindus, but now that P.C. Dutt had been initiated in Bengal a few months earlier, it would appear that Gibbs, together with Dady, wanted to break the deadlock over the initiation of Hindus in Bombay, and Chichgur's request only promised to delay what clearly was inevitable. Dady's "Parsi" lodge,[106] *Cyrus*, was to be the agent for making a statement, not with a mere one or two Hindu initiates, but with four. George Bease hailed the event as the introduction of "a new era into Freemasonry in Bombay."[107]

VI. SCOTTISH FREEMASONRY DEBATES INITIATING HINDUS

Unlike the District Grand Lodge of Bombay (E.C.), which did not have an open debate on the initiation of Hindus (unlike its opposite number in Bengal), the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (S.C.) chose to consult on the matter. It was clear to them that the initation of Hindus in *Cyrus* had put them in a bind, for it meant that these Masons might show up on their lodge doorsteps as visitors. Moreover, it was obvious where things were headed. But the old concerns were still there regarding polytheism and caste, and they were the concerns not only of British, but also Parsi, Masons.

The matter was raised in the P.G.L.'s Quarterly Communication of June 28, 1873, by a letter from the Parsi Master of Lodge *Harmony* in Karachi (Sindh), Ardesheer Gustadjee, on the subject of admitting Hindus into Scottish Constitution lodges, and the

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[105] *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 1 (April 1873): 5.
[106] Lodge *Cyrus* was the youngest of the four "Native" lodges operating in Bombay City.
[107] *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 1 (April 1873): 5.

conduct "proper to be observed towards those already admitted by the Sister Constitution."[108] Apparently, English Constitution lodges in Karachi, quick to jump on the bandwagon of Bombay City, had begun initiating Hindus, much to the consternation of the Scottish Masons there. At the Bombay meeting, the Provincial Grand Treasurer, J.D. Wadia (a Parsi), said "he was of the opinion that if these gentlemen renounced their belief in a plurality of gods, and declared their belief in one only, and in all other respects conformed to the requirements of the Constitutions of Ancient Freemasonry, there could be no objection to their admission to the privileges of the Craft."[109] The Provincial Grand Secretary, J.W. Butler, recommended that "as these Brethren had been admitted by the Sister Constitution, and the Brethren in Kurrachee said they were good men and true, and as they appeared to be willing to conform to all the ancient usages, they be admitted and welcomed among Scottish Masons in this Province."[110] By contrast, the Provincial Grand Chaplain, Rev. W.H. Harpur, urged great caution, saying that

> it was necessary to be careful how we admitted these men among us. Many of them, doubtless, believed only in one God, but outwardly conformed to and joined in the idolatrous rites of Hindoo worship. Hindoos were Polytheists, while Freemasons could not be other than Monotheists, and if a man went on worshipping the Hindoo Idols, while professing his belief in one God only, that was a proof that he was afraid or ashamed that his practice should agree with his profession, and, of course, such a man could not be admitted a Mason. There were, however, some who, while they did not become Christians, had renounced their Idols and worshipped only one God; to such, if otherwise eligible, he thought there could be no objection; indeed the light of Masonry would be of infinite service to them in their search after truth.[111]

Present at this meeting, as well, was Maneckji Cursetji, who had been one of the two instrumental figures (along with James Burnes) in getting Masonry in Western India to open its doors to Indians. Cursetji agreed with the Provincial Grand Chaplain:

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108 *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 5 (August 1873): 191-92.
109 Ibid.: 191-92.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.: 192.

> The question was whether Hindoos did or did not believe in one God. It was 33 years since Parsees were first admitted into Masonry, and they were so admitted at his instance. At that time a form of declaration was adopted, (he did not know if it was at present in force, but it would be found among the records of Provincial Grand Lodge), any person taking which, and being in all other respects eligible, was considered an unobjectionable candidate for Masonic privileges. There was a new sect arisen among the Hindoos, called Brahmos, who, he believed, only worshipped one God; then there were the Jains, among whom he knew of two parties, one of which worshipped the Hindoo gods, while the other differed, not only from the Hindoos, but from the other party, and worshipped one God only. He thought that there need be no difficulty in admitting such candidates, provided they made the declaration to which he alluded, or one of a similar nature.[112]

One can imagine that the members of Lodge *Perseverance* must have raised similar questions about Cursetji and Zoroastrianism, when he sought to become a Mason in 1843! Recent Masonic histories seem to have re-written Cursetji's role in the admission of Hindus into the Craft, stating that the "valiant persistence of R.W. Bro. Maneckji Cursetji had succeeded in mellowing the objections to the admission of Hindus in the Masonic Fraternity, the objections to their religious beliefs and practices had been explained and understood.[113] Clearly, Cursetji was not advocating the free admission of Hindus, nor does he seem to have contributed to any deeper understanding of the Hindu religion, conflating, as he did, Hinduism and Jainism.

Henry Morland, the Provincial Grand Master, then read "several passages from *Paton's Jurisprudence* and the Antient Charges bearing on the point," and said that "whatever opinions Brethren might hold as to the eligibility of Hindoo candidates for the light of Masonry, there was the fact that the Brethren referred to had already been admitted into Masonry in the Sister Constitution, and if one of these Brethren presented himself at the door of the Lodge, he failed to see how he could be refused admission."[114] As to the question of actually initiating Hindus, however, he suggested that a reply to Gustadji's letter be sent favourable to their admission, "provided that after strict inquiry

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[112] Ibid.

[113] G.S. Gupta, comp., *Freemasonic Movement in India* (New Delhi: Indian Masonic Publications, 1981), ch. 3, 54.

[114] *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 5 (August 1873): 192.

had been made into the character, social standing, &c., of each candidate the result was satisfatory, and also that the candidate complied with all the formalities requisite in other cases before admission into Masonry."[115] Morland then proposed that a committee to "arrange the requisite formalities for the admission of Hindoo candidates under the Scottish Banner in this Province" be established. It was to be composed of two Parsis and a Briton: Kharshedji Rustomji Cama, Substitute Provincial Grand Master; Rev. W. H. Harpur, Honorary Provincial Grand Chaplain; and Maneckji Cowasji Murzban, Provincial Grand Senior Warden.

The committee gave its report at the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting in September 1873. K.R. Cama and M.C. Murzban wrote the main part of the report, detailing the history of Indians in Bombay Freemasonry. They asked why, before the initiations in Lodge *Cyrus*, there had been only one initiation of a "Hindu" (Beeneeram) in Bombay.

> We find that the founders and promoters of Lodge *Rising Star* [the oldest of the Native lodges] had intended the initiations to be confined to the Parsee and Mahomedan communities only (though ostensibly, the Lodge was not for a section or sections of Natives only, but for all Natives), believing these sects to profess such distinctive tenets as to allow of the free admission of their members into Masonry, whilst Hinduism was widely known and confessed by its own votaries to recognise a belief in more than one God.[116]

To protect the institution of Freemasonry, the founders of the lodge had strengthened the declaration a candidate had to make concerning monotheism ("I believe in the only one true and living God") and had added a second declaration, regarding justice in the afterlife ("I believe in a state of reward and punishment, in after life, according to deeds done in the flesh"). These declarations had the practical effect of barring Hindu candidates, the report stated.

> But the lapse of 30 years has brought forth a class of young Hindoos who disbelieve in Hinduism and its idolatries, and by the light of English education

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[115] Ibid.

[116] In *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 8 (Nov. 1873): 305.

> they begin to search after a true God. A distinct class of the kind has been founded in Calcutta as Brahmo Samajians, and in Bombay as Prarthana Samajians.[117]
>
> By reason of their joining these sects they are supposed to have severed from Hinduism as synonymous with idolatry, and they, in our opinion, are quite capable of making such a declaration as the founders of the first Native Lodge have very wisely and prudently made it imperative on a Native candidate to give without in any way violating their consciences or imposing on our credulity.
>
> These sects receive large accessions from the English educated Natives every year, and we are seriously of opinion that in first throwing open the portals of Masonry to the Hindoos of this country, *only* whose consciences have been awakened by the light of English education and who have displayed their moral worth and courage by throwing over the trammels of idolatry in a public manner by openly renouncing orthodox Hinduism and joining the reformed monotheistic religion professed by Brahmo Samajian elsewhere and Prarthana Samajians at Bombay, should be held eligible to be proposed for this Lodge.[118]

This report establishes a close link between western-education, religious reform, and Freemasonry in the minds of both Indian and British Masons. It also pits Freemasonry against "orthodox" Hinduism. As we shall see in the following chapter, many of the leading members of the Prarthana Samaj were Freemasons, including one of the new Hindu initiates mentioned above—Bala Mangesh Wagle. One wonders if, instead of passively waiting for a new breed of Hindus to evolve who would be ready to join Freemasonry, whether Freemasonry in Bombay did not, in fact, help create Hindu reform movements that would in turn feed into it.

In the committee report, Murzban dissented somewhat, arguing that he did not think it in keeping with Masonic principles to include only Brahmo and Prarthana Samajis. Moreover, he believed that there were hundreds of western-educated Hindus who did not belong to either of these movements, and yet who were not idolaters. He suggested adding a third declaration to be said by the candidate: "I do not follow idolatrous practices in public or private." (This proposal was merged into the declaration

[117] The "Brahmo Marriage Act" had just been passed in 1872. The law legalized Brahmo marriages, but did so by declaring that Brahmos were not Hindus, and so were not subject to Hindu law. See Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge University Press, 1898), 36-37.
[118] *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 8 (Nov. 1873): 305-06.

on monotheism.) Rev. Harpur urged caution because he feared Freemasonry being "contaminated by caste."[119]

Henry Morland, the Provincial Grand Master spoke last, agreeing with Murzban that one could not discriminate only in favor of members of the reform groups: "I do not myself really believe that because a Hindoo belongs to a particular sect of the caste that he is a bit more worthy or trustworthy than another, provided the latter has had the advantage of education and enlightenment...."[120]

Addressing Harpur's concern about caste consciousness infiltrating the lodge, Morland said that "we must trust to time and circumstances to lessen and remove" it.

> Our Order might, and probably would be very instrumental in breaking down and eventually eradicating prejudices; in the mean time we should be content to allow Hindoos joining the brotherhood to observe such prejudices and customs as they think fit, provided that they do not interfere with the constitutional Landmarks, and show by our abstaining from interfering with them that Masonry is truly free, trusting that the seed thus sown may fall on fertile soil and bear good fruit, and we must wait with patience for the rest.[121]

So fell the final barriers to the admission of Hindus into Freemasonry—easily and without acrimony! Morland took a remarkably lenient and gradualist approach to the issue of caste, especially considering what heated passions it had raised among the Masons of Bengal only a few years earlier. He seemed to be treating Freemasonry as an institution which could train up Hindu members to become reformists, rather than viewing it as being in need of protection from the profane who would corrupt it. Indeed, the whole tenor of the discussion was completely different from what had transpired in Bengal less than a decade before. Part of the reason for this difference was that Hinduism itself was changing, for increasing numbers of western-educated Hindus were accepting the reinterpretations Hinduism carried out by such movements as the Brahmo Samaj, which de-coupled the ideology of Hinduism from the caste system, rationalized the

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[119] Ibid.: 306-07.
[120] Ibid.: 307.
[121] Ibid.: 308.

ideology itself (in the direction of monotheism), and called for the reform of Hindu society.

Once the decision was made to let Hindus in, the Scottish lodges began to initiate or affiliate a number of Hindus. In 1873, for example, Lodge *Rising Star* affiliated three of the Hindu initiates in *Cyrus*. In 1875, it initiated two Hindus members, and three in 1876.[122]

VII. HINDU OPPOSITION TO FREEMASONRY

Although the number of Hindus who were becoming attracted to reformist Hinduism was growing, the overall number was still miniscule. And, as in the case with the Parsis a generation before, there were still many among the orthodox who feared or loathed Hindu reformism. In discussing the initiation of the four Hindus in December 1872, Bease made a prediction in his January 1873 issue:

> We know well that this circumstance will create a great commotion amongst the orthodox Hindoo community, but they must give way in the *present age of enlightenment*, when thousands of their caste are reaping *the fruits of a liberal education*, and *learning to think for themselves*. These four Hindoo gentlemen who have been already initiated, will tell their caste fellows that the first lesson they learned in the Lodge room, was to join with the Parsee and Christian in offering up a prayer to the Great Architect of the Universe, and *that all the moral precepts they were taught at their initiation tended in the same direction as those taught by Manu and other Hindoo sages*.[123]

Once again, the age of enlightenment is linked by Masons to liberal education and freedom of thought, and finally to a latitudinarian approach to religion, where common moral values are stressed over doctrinal differences or superstitious barriers, thus permitting a union between people of different religions. These represent the elements of secularism (of which more in another chapter). In an attempt both to anticipate and refute what he believes the accusations of the orthodox will be, Bease asks

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122 In D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 188, 194-6, 198.

123 *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 363. (Italics mine.)

> But what will the orthodox Hindoos of the present day think of the initiation of four of their highest castemen in the *Bhoothkhana* (as the Lodge room is familiarly called by the Natives)? To hear that they had joined in prayer with the Parsee and Christian; that they were present at the banquet, although they may not have partaken of any of the dainties; that they joined in the toasts of the evening, although it may have been only in cold water. It is enough to say that the four newly-made brethen expressed themselves highly gratified with their initiation, and were fully impressed with the solemn truths they were taught that evening; which they said did not in the slightest militate against their religious principles.[124]

Although Masons are prohibited from soliciting people to join the Craft, Bease, obviously excited by the thought of Hindus entering Freemasonry, stated in this article that for the "information of our Hindoo friends who may be desirous of seeking admission into Freemasonry, we give below the declaration made by Brother Baboo Kettermohun Gangooly, previous to his initiation in Lodge *St. John*, Calcutta, in June 1863, and which belief is all that is required from a Hindoo candidate...."[125] Displeased by the initation of four of their caste members, and perhaps distressed by Bease' advertisement for Freemasonry, a convocation of Hindus of the Saraswat Brahmin caste met in January 1873 to denounce Freemasonry and threaten those Hindus who had been initiated with excommunication. Bease responded:

> As we anticipated, there is a senseless agitation going on amidst *some* of the orthodox Hindoos relating to the Brethren who have joined the Masonic Fraternity. It cannot be for their having been initiated into the mysteries of the Craft, for the very simple reason that the uninitiated can know nothing about it; it cannot be for the obligation they have taken upon themselves to practice every moral and social virtue, to regulate their actions according to the Divine precepts taught in the Volume of the Sacred Law, to do their duty to their God, their neighbour, and themselves, to pay obedience to the laws of the country in which they reside, to assist the poor and needy, to practise every domestic as well as public virtue, to study the liberal arts and sciences, and other excellences of character. It cannot be for any of these things, for Hindoos of all sects are bound

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[124] Ibid.: 364. *Bhootkhana* derives from the Hindu words *bhoot* (ghost or evil spirit) and *khana* (house). This is still a term for a Freemasonic Hall, and probably derived from uninitiated lower-class Indians in the vicinity of such halls speculating on the secret happenings occurring within. I have also heard that Masons encouraged this in order to dissuade snooping.

[125] Ibid.: 365.

> to do all this by their own Shastras. What then is the objection? Their sitting at the banquet table and joining in the toasts of the evening?[126]

Bease chided such orthodox but educated Hindus not only for attending a banquet recently thrown by Sir Albert Sassoon for the Viceroy—at which hundreds of "native gentlemen" were present—but also for holding their own feasts for Europeans and for attending public balls.

Interestingly, Dr. Bhau Daji, an accomplished Orientalist, was a leading opponent of his fellow caste members joining Freemasonry.

> We cannot for a moment believe that such an enlightened gentleman as [the well-respected Orientalist] Dr. Bhau Dajee would take part in this senseless agitation. And yet one of the daily journals stated that on account of his sudden illness, the meeting for excommunicating the newly made Masons was postponed.... The superstitious went so far as to attribute the illness of the good Dr. Bhau Dajee to the influence of the *Booth* or Devil with whom Freemasons are said to be in league, in order to prevent the meeting taking place; also that the same *Booth* went in amongst those who had assembled on a former occasion to excommunicate Bro. Hurrychund Chintamon, so that they quarelled among themselves, and the meeting broke up, leaving Bro. Hurrychund with more friends than he had before. All this and much more had been communicated to us by shrewd Natives, but who are a little more tolerant than the mischief makers.[127]

Most, if not all, of the objections raised by Saraswat Brahmin or Sonar caste leaders to Freemasonry were the same as those raised by Parsi priests and others a generation before. But the linkage between caste and religious ideology was being severed due to modernity (or what the Masons referred to as "enlightenment"), and the power to enforce caste discipline was beginning to crumble, as the "new men" in the various caste communities also become the powerful men in a power structure. Bease notes this with satisfaction:

> But whatever may be done by those misguided men who are taking the lead in what we may term this social rebellion, our newly initiated brethren are safe; the pains and penalties inflicted in the darker days of Hindoo history are now things of the past; hundreds of Hindoos have crossed the seas, and thousands are daily drinking from the fountain of knowledge. Superstition is fast giving way to the

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[126] *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 11 (February 1873), 407. (Author's italics.)

[127] Ibid.: 407-8.

undoubted spread of enlightenment among the higher castes in India; and the unprejudiced will not rest satisfied until they add to the other sciences that they have been taught, the science of Freemasonry, which is really based on a system of the purest morality. In becoming Freemsons, our Hindu brethen have joined a body whose potent influence is felt in every part of the world, and which never deserts its members in their hour of need.[128]

VIII. THE FORMATION OF LODGE *ARYAN*

In 1873, a few Hindu Masons received a Temporary Warrant from the District Grand Lodge (English Constitution) of Bombay to found a lodge named *Aryan*.[129] It seems to have started operating in Nov. 1873, continuing until at least January 1874,[130] but "owing to certain [unstated] difficulties, its [formal] Constitution [based on a Warrant from England] was delayed." Finally, the *Aryan* Lodge was duly constituted in 1877, its aims being to attract and initiate Hindus. Its founding members were Edward Tyrrell Leith, the lodge's first Master, Dr. Joseph Anderson, a surgeon, Bal Mangesh Wagle, the "First Advocate of the High Court of Bombay," Shantaram Narayan and Ghansham Nilkanth Nadkarni, the "most prominent pleaders of the High Court," Dr. Shantaram Vithal-Sanzgiri, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang Tarkhad, and Harichand Chintaman, "a Merchant."[131] Most of the Indians were the same men who had been initiated in Lodge

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[128] Ibid.: 408.

[129] "The 'Aryan' Lodge, (E.C.)—Pending the receipt of a Warrant from the Grand Lodge of England, the District Grand Master has granted a Dispensation for the establishment of the above Lodge, of which W. Bro. E. [Edward] Tyrrell Leith is to be the first Master; Bros. Shantaram Narayan, Senior Warden; Bal Mangesh Wagle, Junior Warden. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday the 12th November next. Amongst the Proceedings of the Provincial Grand Lodge published in this Number, will be found some interesting correspondence regarding the qualifications required to enable Hindoos to obtain admission into Freemasonry. The Provincial Grand Master has taken a most sensible view of the question, by suggesting that Hindoos of all creeds should be eligible, so long as they are intelligent and are prepared to make the necessary declarations."—*MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 8 (November 1873): 281.

[130] "In *Bombay*, Craft Masonry has continued to flourish, so much so that a new element has been introduced by the formation of a Lodge for Hindoos, called *The Aryan*; there is every hope that many enlightened Hindoos will avail themselves of the opportunity to learn the science and mysteries of Freemasonry; and regarding whose admission wise and salutary rules have been framed by the District [E.C.] and Provincial [S.C.] Grand Lodges."—*MRWI*, vol, 10, no. 10 (January 1874): 361.

[131] Dr. Nirbhaya Thakar and Chandrakant M. Patel (recompiled and revised by Vasudeo M. Patel), "Short History of the 'Aryan' Lodge," in *"The 'Aryan' Lodge, No. 30 G.L.I., Centennial Jubilee Celebrations"* souvenir (Bombay: no publisher; date: produced for the lodge's centenary celebrations, held on December 9, 1978). It is possible that the lodge continued to operate for four years under the Temporary Warrant until the actual Grand Lodge Warrant was received, but there is no evidence for this.

Cyrus in December 1872. After the formation of *Aryan*, a considerable number of western-educated Hindus regularly entered Freemasonry, men who had important roles in the economics, politics, and social and religious reformism of the Bombay Presidency.[132]

Although certain lodges—such as Lodge *Aryan*—seem by their names to suggest that they were sectarian in nature, the fact is that membership consisted of Hindus, Muslims, and Parsis (although, in the case of *Aryan*, Hindus did predominate, since it was, after all, founded to screen Hindu applicants). For example, Pherozeshah Mehta, a Parsi, was a member of both Lodge *Rising Star* (mostly Parsi) and Lodge *Aryan*, as was N.G. Chandavarkar, a Saraswat Brahmin. And Lodge *Islam*, which was founded in 1876, "has admitted Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Jews and various other classes of people during its life of over a hundred years."[133]

XI. CONCLUSION

The opposition of Masons to admitting Hindus was mainly, though not solely, due to racial and religious bigotry—especially in Bengal, where, in the early 1840s, after the English Grand Lodge had ruled that no bar was to be placed on the admission of Indians (see chapter 2), "Bengal rejected it," for John Grant, the then Provincial Grand Master of Bengal (E.C.), "could not 'contemplate such a possibility without horror', and gave it as his own opinion that Hindus and Mohammedans alike were not eligible for admission 'on any grounds whatsoever.'"[134]

The success of Hindus in gaining admittance into Freemasonry was in large part due to the persistence of one man, Prosonno Coomar Dutt, who, with the aid of sympathetic rulings by the English Grand Lodge, eventually wore down the resistance of Bengal's Masons. Then, in Western India, the struggle was joined by important European Masons, such as George Bease in the press, and James Gibbs, the District Grand Master

132 As an aside, the lodge has continued operating down to the present day—over 120 years later!

133 G.S. Gupta, ch. 3, 52

134 G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India": 179.

for Bombay. Interestingly, there was no Hindu applicant in Bombay who campaigned continuously and vigorously for the right to be initiated, as did P.C. Dutt in Bengal.

The campaign by western-educated Indians for acceptance into Masonry paralleled, and often preceded, their demand for better opportunities in the government of India, and the same people can be found in the ranks of Freemasonry and in the early Indian nationalist movement. For example, at a lodge meeting of *Anchor and Hope* on Oct. 27, 1876, at which Dutt's prodigious services to Freemasonry were honored, a letter to him signed by the lodge's officers bears the name of none other than "W.C. Bonnerjee, P.M." (i.e., Past Master), who would become the first President of the Indian National Congress in 1885.[135]

At the end-of-the-year meeting in 1887,[136] the resigning Master of Lodge *Anchor and Hope*, Dr. S.P. Sarbadhicary[137] stated, in praising Dutt ("who has grown grey in advancing our cause"):

> We are assembled here to-night in this Ancient and Historic Hall, Brethren numbering to the extent of seventy-five,... and... the most remarkable and pleasing feature of the assembly is that the major portion of it are Hindus by persuasion and children of the soil, and yet the number represents not the whole but a very small fraction.... The founders of the noble Craft perhaps never contemplated nor had any idea that far away in the East... the browny sons of the Ind would one day muster so strong under the Banners of the Craft... *It is and cannot but [be] the distinct gain that the sons of the East and West should forget all racial distinctions, all distinction of caste, colour, and creed, and give a practical effect to the Grand teachings of our Order,* and yet such a state of things was actually an impossibility, but a short fifteen years ago.... In the year of grace, 1863, a young

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135 See *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 16-18. Another important Congress member of the lodge was Rash Behari Ghosh (1845-1921), the well-known jurist, Member of the Imperial Legislative Council, and initiator of the Moderate split in the Indian National Congress. He presided over the 1908 and 1917 sessions of the Congress. See G.S. Gupta, ch. 4, 6, and Parshotam Mehra, 269-70.

136 Dec. 20, 1887. A subscription was taken up at this meeting for a portrait of Prosonno Coomar Dutt. Nobin Chand Bural, a Past Master, also listed as being a "Past District Grand Warden of Bengal." The meeting's visitors included R.D. Mehta, C.I.E., a Past District Grand Deacon. In a speech given by him, Mehta refers to another fellow Parsi, H.M. Rustomjee, as being the District Grand Secretary. Obviously, by the late-1880s, the Indian invasion of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal had been prosecuted with vigor! See *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 19-24.

137 He seems to be a brother of Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary (1862-1935), who for many years was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council and the Imperial L.C., and also a sub-editor of the *Hindu Patriot*.

> Hindu, an ardent and devoted seeker after truth and light, applied for admission into the Fraternity, and, I am sorry to say, was peremtorily sent away, but [a] missionary's burning spirit was in him, and he was nothing daunted.... [Bro. Dutt's] reputation has travelled on to England... it has even crossed the Atlantic; English, Scottish, Irish, and American Lodges are equally proud to be associated with his name, and it was only the other day he was made an honorary member of a Lodge in Canada ('Thorne,' No. 281, Canadian Constitution),..."[138]

Sarbadhicary's description of Dutt's "missionary's burning spirit" is ironic, for, unlike European Christian evangelists, who sought to missionize and convert Indians, the European Masons of Bengal had persistently tried to keep Indians out of their "mysteries." Yet Indians, who had for the most part steadfastly avoided conversion to Christianity, eagerly sought entry into Masonry.

Sarbadhicary no doubt expressed the sentiments of most of the Indian members of the lodge—where more than just W.C. Bonnerjee and Rash Behari Ghosh must have been members of the Congress (or at least sympathizers)—when he spoke of people of all races, castes, and religions, whether of the East or West, joining together to give "practical effect to the Grand teachings of our Order." This mirrored the pluralistic vision of India, as well as the desire for a closer and more equitable union between India and Britain, that the Indian National Congress espoused. At the same time, this was also a vision of what the British Empire could be, and it could not have been lost on the consciousness of the Hindu and other Indian Masons at this meeting that one of their own had just been honored with membership in a Canadian lodge, half a world away. Masonic membership meant joining a world-wide fraternity, and membership could lead to international recognition and honors within that fraternity (which no doubt commanded the respect of even the British in India). Indeed, no other institution in either the Empire or the world at the time could confer on its members something akin to universal citizenship. And of all the lodge's members, P.C. Dutt himself was surely the most thorough-going internationalist. He had active and honorary memberships in lodges,

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[138] S.P. Sarbadhicary, in *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 19-20 (my italics). If we are to trust Sarbadhicary, there were many Hindu Masons in Bengal at this time, and a thorough study of Indians in Freemasonry on that side of India would probably amply reward the historian.

Masonic organizations, and higher Masonic bodies throughout India, and in England, Canada, Boston, New York, Italy, Rumania, Spain, and Scotland. Moreover, in 1884 he was granted a charter by the Sovereign Grand Master-General of a Masonic higher-degree body—the "Sovereign Sanctuary of Royal Masonic Rite of the United States of America," Valley of Boston—to open an independent "Sovereign Sanctuary for the Empire of India," with himself as the "Most Illustrious Sovereign Grand Master-General" and the Maharaja of Cooch-Behar as his deputy.[139]

Nor were Indian sentiments of interracial unity unreciprocated. At the same meeting, Thomas Jones, a Past Master of the lodge—as well as Past Grand Deacon of England and Past Deputy District Grand Master of Bengal—declared:

> Happy am I to be able to say that I was among the first to accord to Bro. P.C. Dutt a welcome among us; happier still to contemplate the manifold benefits conferred by his past honorable career as a Ruler of the Craft.... Whatever the merits of 'Anchor and Hope' as a working Lodge, great as indeed they are,—are results heretofore unlooked for,... *and that is the power of Masonry to create and cement the bond of union which now exists between the Races of the East and West in this land.*[140]

Such fraternization—both ritual and social—represents a hidden history of both the Indian Empire and Indian nationalism, and it will be explored in-depth in subsequent chapters. To fully understand Freemasonry's contribution to this history, though, it is necessary to explore its religious ideology, and, then, to examine how this ideology influenced reformulations of Indian religions and society.

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139 See *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry*, 31-34 and 59-62. Most poignant of all, however—and indicative of Masonry's ability to inspire brotherly love—must be his membership, beginning in 1879, in Lodge *Sandeman*, No. 1374 (E.C.), at Dum-Dum, near Calcutta, named for his erstwhile nemesis. Indeed, over time, Dutt had become well-loved by the old Masons of Calcutta—see N. C. Bural's speech on pg. 24.

140 Thomas Jones, in ibid., 27-28 (my italics).

CHAPTER 4

FREEMASONRY AND THE THEOSOPHICAL ENLIGHTENMENT

> All over the world we find traces of the initiatory rites of a boy into manhood, with their tremendous and primitive oaths of secrecy, their exclusion of women, their secret signs and tokens. But alas! their days are numbered; even now they are becoming neglected, and, even when still carried out, the ritual is done in a more and more perfunctory way. The old men die off and the young men, spoilt by a Western civilisation which they cannot yet properly assimilate, have learnt sufficient to despise these old rites and not enough to venerate them. They are "heathenish" customs, and so are condemned, and soon the world will know them no more. Already much has been lost, but, before it is altogether too late, I beg my brother Masons through the world to investigate and note down and place on permanent record any signs and tokens common to them and to Freemasonry.... My contention, then, is that Freemasonry derives originally from those primitive rites which first taught a boy whence he came, then prepared him to be a useful member of society, and finally taught him how to die and that death did not end all. On these primitive rites, I consider, man built up the mysteries and the various religious faiths of the ancient world, some of which have survived to the present day, while others have developed into new religions, Christianity included.
>
> (John Sebastian Marlow Ward, *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*)[1]

I. INTRODUCTION

Any attempt to understand Freemasonry's contribution to British imperialism, indigenous socio-religious reform, and Indian nationalism would be quite incomplete without a proper analysis of how Freemasons viewed religion, which had the effect of favorably altering India's religious and spiritual position *vis-a-vis* the West. This overlaps somewhat with the Orientalist project of the early 19th century, but goes far deeper, taking a mystical and romantic trajectory in its search for the common ground of all religions and the common ties that bind all humanity together.

Masonic religious formulations can be traced back at least to the Reformation, but attain their mature form during the Enlightenment and later. Since the Enlightenment had its origins in the West, this chapter will look mostly at the views of Westerners. Later

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[1] J.S.M. Ward, *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*, 2nd ed. (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, and Co., Ltd., 1926; first publ. 1921), 121-23.

chapters will show how Indians adopted and adapted these formulations for their own purposes. It is also important to look at the last phase of these Enlightenment religious speculations—the Theosophical Society, which in many ways saw itself as a purified (hence, superior) version of Freemasonry. Although historians have neglected the role of Freemasonry in the development of modern Indian nationalism they have given the Theosophical Society an important ideological role in it[2], and therefore it is necessary to situate that movement in a larger Masonic context, where it belongs. This will show that Masonry was channeled through various movements (which we shall explore further in future chapters) that were not officially Masonic, but which were imbued with Masonic thinking and even structure.

The European Enlightenment was a constellation of philosophical features, and contemporaries believed those features to be universally true and applicable. The Enlightenment was in its essence a universalizing project (as shown by the Romantic reaction, which specifically rejected such universalism). One component of the Enlightenment was spiritual: what Joscelyn Godwin in his book of the same name calls the "Theosophical Enlightenment."[3] This reflected a fascination with classical paganism, Egyptian religion, and Celtic and then Eastern religions (as the British occupation of India gradually made these known to 18th-century Europe). Freemasons indulged in, and contributed greatly to, this project even as early as the 17th century (in the case of Classical religion) as Margaret Jacob points out,[4] and Freemasonic journals and printers were major disseminators of this intellectual current in the 18th and 19th centuries, just as

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[2] See, for example, Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 250-52.

[3] See Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). The term "theosophy" was "revived in the seventeenth century 'to denote a kind of speculation... which sought, usually by the doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm, to derive from the knowledge of God contained in sacred books, or traditions mystically interpreted, a profounder knowledge and control of nature than could be obtained by the methods of the Aristotelian or other current philosophy'" —James A. Santucci, *Theosophy and the Theosophical Society* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1985), 1. The source for Santucci's quote is the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), 279.

[4] See Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981).

they were of Enlightenment literature generally. Indeed, if the universal civilization which the Enlightenment thinkers sought to create had a religion, it was surely Freemasonry: its creed was tolerant, cosmopolitan, progressive, egalitarian, espousing universal morality, and simultaneously communitarian and individualistic (because anti-corporatist).

A key impulse underlying Classical studies—and then Orientalism—was the desire to restore the degraded present to the condition of a glorious past. This impulse derived from the Renaissance, where Europe sought to restore itself to the literary, architectural, and legal level of the Romans. To this, the Enlightenment added the idea of progress. But this idea began as a "future past;" and led past Rome and Greece to an attempt to find age-old lost secrets in Egyptian Hermeticism in order to carry European civilization forward.[5] Finally, in Orientalism, we have an effort to restore for conquered peoples *their* lost heights of civilization.

Although in India the Orientalists lost officially to the Anglicists in government policy in the 1830s, Orientalism and the larger Theosophical Enlightenment project has survived until today in the institution of Freemasonry and other Masonically-derived organizations, with important consequences for the development of India. India also provided Freemasons with a new treasure-trove of symbolism, mythology, ritual, and theology to pore over and incorporate into their grand unified theory of religion, thus bolstering their claims for the movement. For, many Masons saw Freemasonry either as a survival of the ancient mystery religions, coeval with them, or their precursor.[6] In the words of one Masonic author, G.H. Stapleton, writing in 1857: "From the

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[5] The reverse of the Great Seal of the United States on the back of every dollar bill is an excellent example of this: under the Egyptian pyramid, we read in Latin: "a new order in the world."

[6] Being a movement which allows for a good deal of diversity of opinion, Masons have no officially agreed upon position regarding their origins. The opinions of Masonic authors expressed below therefore represent intellectual currents in the movement, but unauthoritative ones.

commencement of the World, we may trace the foundation of Masonry."[7] By the mid-19th century, many Masons had come to see themselves as the preservers of a primordial religion, keepers of the light through the ages, and ever ready to purify the religions of the world so that the ancient Masonic truths they contained might be manifested.

Paradoxically (but typical of Enlightenment thinking), Freemasonry also claimed a status as the champion of modernity and scientific progress, in a *tour de force* where ancient mysteries were reconciled with the ethos of a new age. A body which stressed ritual conservatism and antiquity thus became a vehicle for modernity, presented as an ancient—now recovered—worldview. The "belief in ancient wisdom, that changeless truths were revealed in the past and are recoverable only through the study of the past, is religious in character, and it can occur side by side with a 'future wisdom' belief in the cumulative progress of scientific knowledge.... It is hard to recapture this almost *Masonic sense of the present value of India's past*."[8] The original project of European and Masonic modernity, then, was simultaneously backward and forward-looking. Western-educated Indians would in time adopt this perspective and apply it to their own society.

II. THE THEOSOPHICAL ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

In order to observe the maturation of primordialist and universalist claims in Masonic ideology, it is necessary to trace the evolution of the Theosophical Enlightenment. According to Joscelyn Godwin, in 1786, the Englishman, Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824), published a book-length essay, *A Discourse on the Worship of*

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[7] G.H. Stapleton, compiler, *The Hand-book of Free Masonry, Adapted for the Use of Lodges, Chapters, and Convocations and the Instruction of Individual Members of the Craft*, 3rd ed., revised and improved (Calcutta: R.C. LePage and Co., British Library, 1857), 2.

[8] Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997), 61 (my italics). In a footnote on the same page, Trautmann goes on to say: "Perhaps someday someone will work out the relations between Freemasonry and the Orientalist study of India. This is one of those good ideas that is very difficult to carry out." Many thanks to Prof. Eugene Irschick for drawing my attention to this book and this reference. Joscelyn Godwin's *Theosophical Enlightenment* is in part a contribution to this "good idea," and I trust this work will be, too.

Priapus and its Connexion with the Mystic Theology of the Ancients, in which he betrays an admiration for the "pure theism of the eclectic Jews such as Philo [Judeaus], and the theology of the *Bhagavad Gita*."[9] The work revealed an ancient ecumenical theology "which the men of the Enlightenment found so attractive." Knight "recognized in the *Bhagavad Gita* 'the same one principle of life universally emanated and expanded, and ever partially returning to be again absorbed in the infinite abyss of intellectual being" (i.e., the God of Nature, "'the First, the Supreme, the Intellectual'").[10]

For Knight, this ancient theology involved a division of God into a male and female aspect, thus leading to cosmic, generative copulations, depicted with frankness in the art and literature of these ancient religions, especially that of Hindu India. "At a time when the discovery of Indian erotic art was commonly regarded, even by those without missionary interests, as proof of the depravity of Hindus in comparison to Europeans, Knight was one of the very first to assert the unanimity of Hindu doctrine with the 'ancient theology' of Egypt, Persia, and the West."[11] Knight saw phalluses everywhere, even in the spires of Christian churches. Given such subject matter, it was to be expected that the *Discourse* "enjoyed a notoriety out of all proportion to its distribution, and its reputation followed him throughout his career."[12]

Although it is unclear whether or not Knight was a Mason, he represents many tendencies in Masonry. Knight, for example, decried the dogmatic theology and religious persecution of the Christian (especially the Catholic) Church and went so far as to claim that the old Roman Empire had been more tolerant than the Christian Order which succeeded it. In 1796, he wrote a political poem, *The Progress of Civil Society*, in which he describes the cruelty of Catholic *ancien regime* France.[13] The poem's title is an intriguing one, for it rounds off the Enlightenment project in the career of one man who

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9 Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 9.
10 Ibid., 9.
11 Ibid., 10.
12 Ibid., 11.
13 Ibid.

was involved in the research into antiquities, the search for a primordial universal religion, the idea of progress and perfectibility, and the development of civil society!

In India, Sir William Jones (1746-1794), founder of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, wrote an essay in 1784, "On the gods of Greece, Italy, and India." Jones' thesis "was the common one, for his time, of cross-cultural identity: the gods of these different nations resembled each other because there had been contacts in one direction or another. Often applied to Greece and Egypt, this theory was now to be tested on the fresh ground of India."[14] This essay was published in the inaugural volume of *Asiatic Researches* in 1788, hence it was circulated after the publication of Knight's *Discourse*, and would have been seen as supporting Knight's thesis.

In 1792, India-based Lt. Francis Wilford wrote an article for the *Asiatic Researches*, entitled "On Egypt and other countries... from the ancient books of the Hindus."[15] He is almost certainly the same "F. Wilford" who shows up as a Senior Warden of Lodge *Industry and Perseverance* of Calcutta in 1787 and who was a member of the lodge for some years prior.[16]

Wilford describes a Hindu creation myth centered around Shiva and Parvati, with a struggle between their respective supporters, who argue over whether the female or the male principle is primarily responsible for creation. He then finds parallels in Greece (Eleusis) and among the Hebrews when they lapsed into Canaanite phallic worship. One group in Greece even attempted a union of the *lingam* and *yoni* principles, symbolized by the boat Argo. Wilford's account of this prehistoric sexual schism was reprinted verbatim in Edward Moor's influential *Hindu Pantheon* in 1810.[17] In another article,

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[14] Ibid., 16.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Walter K. Firminger, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times: Being a History of the Early Days of Lodge Industry and Perseverance No.109 of England, 1761-1812* (Mysore: K. A. Korula at the Wesley Press and Publishing House, 1961?), 31n and 465: According to Firminger, F. Wilford was "most probably Lt-Col. Francis Wilford, the distinguished Orientalist, who died at Benares on September 4th, 1822."
[17] Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 17.

Wilford pointed out "that the mysterious words that closed the Eleusinian mysteries, 'Konx, Om, Pax,' were the same as the Sanskrit 'Cancsha, Om, Pacsha,' pronounced at every transaction, thus suggesting a primordial, world-wide system of mystery initiations."[18] Godwin appears unaware of Wilford's Masonic membership, but it explains his fascination with a universal, ancient initiatory regime which, to Masons, still survives in the "Craft."

A few decades later, in 1834, an Irish Mason, Henry O'Brien (1808-1835), wrote *The Round Towers of Ireland (or the Mysteries of Freemasonry, of Sabaism, and of Budhism, for the first time unveiled*), in which he traced the transmission of phallic worship from India (which suggests a shifting of the standard Enlightenment point of ancient origin away from Egypt) ultimately to Ireland. "It was probably the first Irish work to incorporate... the new knowledge of the *Asiatic Researches*"[19] of William Jones, and it was the only English-language treatise on the sexual theory of mythology to appear between Payne Knight's *Discourse* of 1786 and the revival of those ideas in the 1860s, "not among anthropologists or academic historians, but in the coteries of Freemasons, self-styled 'Rosicrucians' and collectors of erotica. Robert Martin, M.D., presented the whole complex in 1860 to the readers of the *Freemasons Magazine and Masonic Monitor*: the male and female principles, phallic worship in the Bible, revolting rites in Hindustan, and the etymologies of 'Bro. O'Brien.'"[20]

III. FREEMASONRY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS

Long before Knight, and perhaps unbeknownst to Godwyn, we find James Anderson, compiler of the Masonic *Constitutions* in 1723, commencing the history of Masonry (and geometry) with Adam, and tracing its subsequent diffusion to the rest of the world. This world was mostly pagan, but the Israelites received Masonry, too, and

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 22.
[20] Ibid.

when they left Egypt, Anderson says, Moses "became the General Master-Mason, as well as King of the *Jessurun*, being well skill'd in all the *Egyptian* Learning, and divinely inspir'd with more sublime Knowledge in *Masonry*. So that the *Israelites*... were a whole Kingdom of *Masons*, well instructed under the Conduct of their Grand Master Moses...."[21] This skill was to culminate in the building of Solomon's Temple, although, interestingly, Solomon's most expert Masons came not from Israel, but from the vassal state of Tyre, especially Hiram Abif (the famous "Widow's Son"), "the most accomplished Mason upon Earth."[22] After the building was completed,

> *Masonry* was improv'd in all the neighbouring Nations; for the many Artists employ'd about it, under *Hiram Abif*, after it was finish'd dispers'd themselves into *Syria*, *Mesopotamia*, *Assyria*, *Chaldea*, *Babylonia*, *Media*, *Persia*, *Arabia*, *Africa*, *Lesser Asia*, *Greece*, and other parts of *Europe*, where they taught this liberal Art to the *free born* Sons of eminent Persons, by whose Dexterity the Kings, Princes, and Potentates, built many glorious Piles, and became the Grand Masters, each in his own Territory, and were emulous of excelling in this *Royal Art*; nay, even in India, where the Correspondence was open, we may conclude the same: But none of the Nations, nor all together, could rival the *Israelites*, far less excell them, in *Masonry*; and their *Temple* remain'd the constant Pattern.[23]

Instead of attempting to pursue the history of Masonry everywhere, Anderson proceeds to trace its progress (at this time it is still "operative" or practical Masonry, but carrying with it a secret knowledge about the true manner of worshipping God) through the Graeco-Roman world, and then into Europe and, finally, England. Given the fact that Anderson was a Prebyterian minister, and also that knowedge of Asia was still skimpy in the early 18th century, it is easy to see why Anderson focuses on a more Biblical and Classical orientation for the history of Freemasonry. The key points that come out in his work, though, are (1) that the art of Masonry is universal and coeval with the human race, and (2) that modern Freemasons are the inheritors of this practical and mystical art.

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[21] James Anderson, comp., *The Constitutions of Freemasons, 1723: Reproduced in Facsimile From the Original Edition* (London: Bernard Quaritch Limited, 1923): 8 (italics in original).

[22] Ibid., 11. Anderson believes Hiram's mother to have been an Israelite.

[23] Ibid., 14-15 (italics in original).

Freemasonry's claim to primordial universalism was bold, and Masons who accepted it proclaimed it proudly while at the same time being careful to stress that Freemasonry was *not* a religion, but a handmaid of religion and, hence, not in competition with any monotheistic religion. In the course of the 18th century, Anderson's history would be augmented—even altered—and Freemasonry increasingly linked to other religions, as Masonic scholars ransacked the ancient past and also foreign, primitive cultures, using ritual and symbolism to draw parallels between the various religions—especially the mystery cults—of the world (including Masonry), and becoming the first organized body of structuralist students of religion in the process. Thus we read in the *Masonic Record*:

> In all the old mysteries (at least in their palmy days), these extraordinary doctrines were regularly taught—viz., the unity and triunity of the Godhead (e.g., in Plato), the creation and fall of man, and the expiation of sin by the voluntary death of a promised mediator... [A]nd, what is far more wonderful, they taught a resurrection and future state..., the candidate at his initiation being figured as dying, and being afterwards restored to life. They also taught that the good would be rewarded, and the wicked punished after death.[24]

Among the early Masonic exponents of this project were Wilford and O'Brien, but by the mid-19th century Indian Masonry witnessed an explosion of such ideas, as indicated by the Masonic literature published in India or by Masons with experience in India.

Until perhaps the early 19th century, the most ancient civilization known to the West was Egypt and, even after that, many Masons continued to trace the roots of their movement through that land:

> Ancient Initiation.—In Egypt the ceremonies of initiation into the mysteries took place in a pyramid erected over a cavern. *The present pyramids of Egypt are nothing more or less than Masonic Temples*, and these were so constructed as to defy the ravages of times. The Arabs have a tradition that the present pyramids were built by Saurid Ibn Salhouk, King of Egypt, who lived three hundred years before the deluge, and who adopted the curious form of building on account of the great solidity it gave to the structure, and its symbolical reference to the sun—the

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[24] "Divine Truths in the Ancient Mysteries," in *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 4, no. 4 (April 1867): 133.

> spiral flame. It was also to indicate the God-head; for having three sides, it represented *trinity* in unity, and wisdom, strength, and beauty. The caverns under these places of initiation, or Temples of Masonry, usually extended east and west, and differed in their appearance,... *In these caverns were celebrated the rites of Ancient Masonry.*[25]

Among other things, this piece presents ancient Egyptian paganism as actually a Trinitarian form of monotheism, and so implicitly argues for a rehabilitation of what at first glance appear to be a polytheistic religion. Freemasons would apply this approach to the religions they found in India.

In another article in the *Masonic Record* (taken from the *Freemason* of London) we read of Egypt that, although Freemasonry

> was not actually originated in Egypt, yet it is well-known that the Egyptian nation was of the first that sought to be initiated into its mysteries and privileges, and so universally was its diffusion over the country, that even to this day many of the ordinary modes of salutation by the people may be clearly traced back to ancient Freemasonry, for they are manifestly imperfect copies of some of our signs. With these facts before us it does appear strange that we do not find any old lodges in the country, but since the days of Pythagoras and other ancient philosophers, who were real working Masons, and whose delight was to scatter far and near the principles of Freemasonry, many centuries have elapsed during the latter part of which time the old ardent spirit of our brethren forefathers appears to have died out.[26]

Here we see a more anthropological feature of Freemasonic comparative religions: finding Masonic symbolism, signs, and grips among the people of *living* cultures, thus demonstrating the universal diffusion of ancient Masonry, and by extension, the connection between all present-day cultures. This implies that Freemasonry is the missing link between all segments of the human race, across time and space—a compelling idea, indeed!

By the mid-19th century ancient links between Egypt and India were beginning to be posited, suggesting an equal antiquity for both civilizations. For example, the American physician, and noted Masonic scholar, Albert G. Mackey (1807-81), who

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[25] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 5 (August 1875), 177 (my italics). No attribution is given for this article, hence, it may have been written by the editor, George Bease, himself.

[26] In *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 5 (August 1870): 173.

contributed much to Masonic comparative religions and Masonic law, wrote an article which showed up in the *Masonic Record* (in 1867) on the significance of the lotus in the religions of Egypt and India, drawing on the previous work of none other than Richard Payne Knight, "who has written so much research upon the mystic theology of the ancients."[27]

In some cases, the Egyptians could be left out of the picture altogether, while the ancient Indians were included:

> Dr. Borlase has traced a surprising uniformity in the temples, priests, doctrines and worship of the Persian Magi and the British Druids. "This conformity (say[s] Faber) is so striking and extraordinary, that Pellontier, in his history of the Celts, will have it that the Persians and the Celts were originally one and the same people; and Major Vallencey is of the same opinion, adding that the Druids first flourished in the East, in Hindostan as Brahmins, in Babylon and Syria as Chaldeans, and in Persia as Magi, and from thence came hither with that great body of Persian Scythians whom the Greeks call Phoenicians."[28]

One wonders what effect might have been produced in the minds of Parsis and Hindus when they read that the ancient Magi and Brahmins belonged to the same priestly order that later produced the religious leaders of the ancient British!

Masons were hopelessly habituated to antiquarianism and the ancient mysteries, as indicated by the number of articles on these subjects in the *Masonic Record of Western India*. In addition to Indian-authored material, the *Masonic Record* also lifted numerous antiquarian articles from the Masonic publications of other countries, which shows that this was indeed a universal predilection.

Since these ancient cults were seen as deriving from primordial Freemasonry, taught to Adam at the beginning of the world and still maintained in the Masonic Order, judgments could be made about the extent to which they had deviated from pristine Freemasonry and had become "spurious." Col. Alexander John Greenlaw (d. 1870)—a respected Mason of British India, whose Masonic distinctions included the rank of

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[27] *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 5 (August 1867): 174.

[28] *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 4 (July 1867): 139.

District Grand Master of British Burma (E.C.), and who in the "profane" world was appointed Paymaster of the Madras Presidency Division in 1869[29]—traced "spurious Masonry" to the descendants of Ham, who "blended their idolatry with these truths, yet naturally kept up much of the truth in their *secret worship*. This secret instruction was Masonry, and called spurious Masonry, because so blended with idolatry."[30] Thus, in ancient Egypt there was an esoteric tradition which was truer to the Masonic doctrine—because less idolatrous—than the exoteric religion taught to the masses. The label "spurious," therefore, was not an unqualified disparagement, but a technical term, one which indicated that truth still remained in the religion, especially the esoteric cult, which was less idolatrous.

Since the Masons had preserved the true doctrine intact, this, along with their knowledge of comparative religions, gave them an advantageous position from which to correctly interpret the religious symbols and myths that the practitioners of these religions had now either forgotten or only imperfectly understood. The Masonic discourse on comparative religions assumed for itself an authoritative, even hegemonic, status. In a lecture discussing "The Mysteries of India or Hindoo System,"[31] Greenlaw, after initially describing Hinduism as being "replete with idols and disgusting rites, their gods so numerous and absurd," nevertheless goes on to say that Masonic knowledge ("the knowledge that *we* have") allows one to look at Hinduism in a new light, and to prove that "all systems of idolatrous religions, from the most elaborate to the most barbarous, exhibit so uniform an appearance, that we may safely decide them to be branches from

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[29] *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 11 (February, 1869): 402

[30] A.J. Greenlaw, *Masonic Lectures Delivered in Open Lodge, Chapter, etc.*, (Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1905; orig. publ. 1870), 147 (my italics). This book of lectures by an Anglo-Indian Mason, full of studies of ancient religions and their connections with Freemasonry, became popular in the second half of the nineteenth century and underwent at least one reprinting in the early twentieth. George Bease, editor of the *MRWI*, praised these Masonic lectures, delivered by Greenlaw in Lodge *Victoria in Burmah*, No. 832, E.C., in the *Masonic Record*'s June 1870 issue (vol. 7, no. 3, pg. 83). Greenlaw's death in 1870 is recorded in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 8 (Nov. 1870): 286. See also the article on Greenlaw in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 7 (Oct. 1870): 244.

[31] See A.J. Greenlaw, *Masonic Lectures*, 158-171 (Lecture No. 7).

the same root." In another part of the lecture, he says of Hinduism: "Nor is there any system that so clearly proves that 'all religions have come from one common origin.'" Greenlaw describes the Hindu trinity as a *triune* Deity—one God in three manifestations—thus making the early Hindus trinitarian monotheists, and he asserts that "the Hindoo religion approaches nearer to our sacred law than any other Pagan rite."

Describing the Indo-European linguistic family and the theory of a migration from Central Asia to India, Greenlaw seems to make a distinction between the modern sects of Hinduism and the ancient religion of the Hindus, perhaps (though this is unclear—see below) to distinguish modern "idols and disgusting rites" from a more pristine doctrine, which, like that of the ancient Persians, he says, was a worship of the elements as manifestations of the ineffable God:

> The mythology of the Vedas... personifies the elements and planets, and thus differs from the more legendary poems which inculcate the worship of deified heroes. The Vedas undoubtedly teach the belief of one Supreme Being.... I shall give you the true belief of the pure high Brahmins and their Vedas divested of all the additions of poets and others.... They tell you that of their Supreme Being there is no image—that He is the only God, that He is without parts, incomprehensible, so much so that they cannot have an idol of him; like ourselves they affirm him to be *triune,... eternal,... immaterial, invisible, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent,...* the great Only one, such is the supreme god of the Hindoo, and may I not add, of ourselves, indeed of the whole world. Can anything more beautiful be found in any other system?

So, while beginning with a "profane" (i.e., non-Masonic) view of Hinduism as an "absurd," "disgusting" religion, Greenlaw argues that for the initiate of the Masonic mysteries, who can observe the deeper aspects of the religion and its symbolism and see its structural cognates in other religions, Hinduism is in fact a system of religion more beautiful than any other! Whether the "high Brahmins" Greenlaw speaks of represent his contemporaries or ancient Brahmins, he doesn't say. Such views could easily be made the basis for the reform of Hinduism by Indians, and, indeed, they find their echo in the

ideology of Hindu religious reform movements during the 19th century (see next chapter).[32]

Greenlaw then tackles a subject which runs the risk of offending the sensibilities and evoking the prejudices of his Victorian audience: the religious symbolism of the *lingam* and *yoni*. For Greenlaw,

> Eight of the principal gods of Egypt were represented as sailing over the sea in a ship called Argho, our ark.... One of the most singular modes in which the Ark of Noah has been made the object of veneration may be seen in the Indian Argha.... This consists of the Linga placed upon the Yoni, these are the symbols of Mahadeva and Parvati.... This linga is merely the Phallus which was held in religious veneration by nearly every nation.... The Indians believe that at the deluge everything was destroyed except the male and female generative principles,... Thus these two principles in this united form are said to have floated in the surface of the waters during their prevalence on earth, and thus became the progenitors of a new race of men.... Here too was the first outline of the 'point within a circle' symbolized by us in a far different light."

Just as Albert G. Mackey had recycled Richard Payne Knight's ideas, as we saw above, so now Greenlaw is lifting wholesale from his Masonic predecessors, Francis Wilford and Henry O'Brien, the phallicism (even the symbol of Argho) which, as Joscelyn Godwin points out, was so much a part of the Theosophical Enlightenment. Greenlaw, in an obvious reference to O'Brien's work, notes that the signs of phallic worship exist all over the world—"Persia, England, Ireland, Scandinavia, as well as around us [i.e., in India]"—and hopes both that "what I have brought to your notice this evening may lead us to look more favourably on the religion of so large a portion of our fellow-men, and that these truths may be so clearly made known to them that they may come back to the original pure worship—true Masonry—*by means of these very idolatries*."[33] In this lecture, Greenlaw has tackled that aspect of Hindu religion most offensive to Westerners—phallic worship—and shown it to be universal (present even in Western

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[32] While it is true that Ram Mohan Roy's reinterpretations of Hinduism occur early on in the 19th century, we cannot say that he, too, was not influenced by Masonic speculations. As we shall see in another chapter, he was pleased to have a Masonic ceremony for the stone-laying of the Hindu College in Calcutta. Later Hindu socio-religious reformers had a clearer connection to Freemasonry as Chapter 5 will show.

[33] My italics.

Europe) and associated with Noah's Ark and Egyptian religion: all in an attempt to get his audience to look tolerantly, perhaps even favorably, on Hinduism.[34]

Nor was the standard Orientalist assumption of a purer past and debased present for Hinduism clearly marked, for although Hindus had sunk into idolatry (like so many other nations of old), nevertheless, when looked at in the right way, their religion still contained the true teachings of Masonry, which was "in the first ages of the world a system of pure religion."[35] We also see this in a short preface to some verse by an English poet which Rev. J.J. Farnham includes in an issue of his *Indian Journal of Freemasonry* (Bombay), which ran for a couple of years in the mid-1860s:

> Southey, that Poet learned in Hindoo Mythology, shows the reader of general literature, in his "Curse of Kehama" (splendid Poem!) that there is something of Freemasonry in Hindooism. When the glendoveer Ereenia reaches the summit of Mount Calasy [i.e., Kailash], the seat of the incomprehensible Seeva, *he does not see the deity as an idolator would have seen him.*[36]

When current "debased" rituals and practices (such as *lingam* and *yoni* reverence, although obviously not *sati*) could be reinterpreted in a manner which was not obscene, and could communicate ancient truths besides, what need was there to recover a purer, more moral *past* for Hinduism? Modern-day Hinduism, if viewed correctly by a global interpretive community such as the Freemasons, deserved to occupy a respected place among the world's religions. But there *was* a need to recover a past *before* Hinduism, one from which all the pagan religions had degenerated; thus Greenlaw expressed a

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[34] Greenlaw spends much of this lecture relating Hindu gods and myths to those of the ancient Egyptians and the Bible. For example, "the Hindoo god Rama is both Moses and Bacchus."

[35] A.J. Greenlaw, *Masonic Lectures*, 1 (Lecture No. 1). Greenlaw says of this pure, primordial religion: "No temples, no altars, idols, nor rites or ceremonies were then required. This indeed was the *pure* worship of God, but when men degenerated, and looked on God's glorious Sun which He had made to rule the day as the symbol of God, and called it His dwelling place, whose Spirit pervades the whole universe, and then worshipped the Sun as God and afterwards looked on the moon and stars with the same religious worship, *then*, the true believers found it necessary to preserve their faith and worship from being mixed up with these idolatries, and so formed a bond of friendship among themselves—and indissoluble tie of affection and brotherly love, to be good men and true, and to hand down to future ages, pure and unsullied God's gracious promises—His unbounded mercy and love to mankind, as also that pure system of worship, which was and indeed still is Masonry."

[36] "Freemasonry and Hindooism," in *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 5 (August, 1865): 71 (my italics).

missionary's dream: it was the task of Masons—who alone could identify this pure religion which had been carried throughout the world after the Tower of Babel, and which had been "perverted by the heathen" by being mixed up with idolatry—to use Hindu religious symbolism and teachings in order to lead Hindus back to their true religion—Masonry! "To preserve the true religion, Masonry was instituted, so you see all these systems, though so full of idolatry, have sprung up for the pure faith of God's people. May they soon return to the true faith and worship God instead of the creature."[37]

In contrast to Greenlaw, certain Masons thought Hinduism could provide a deeper understanding into Masonic rituals and symbols. In a letter to the *Masonic Record* from Jabalpur in February 1876, the writer, a Mason styling himself "Triangle," makes Masonic connections with, besides the *lingam*, the *trimurti*, "*trisule*" ("*our Trident*, or Broad Arrow of Government, or the renowned trefoil (Shamrock) of the Irish!") and other Hindu symbols, such as double triangles, endless serpents, and "numerous other [mainly triadic] signs used in Masonry" which are "common all over India," and were "known and worshipped ages before Christianity was heard of." "Triangle" also writes:

> "R.A." Masons [i.e., Royal Arch Masonry—a higher degree Masonic system popular among British Masons] should also note how the Sacred Cord is composed and worn by Brahmins.
> *Three times three* (emblematic of the Trinity worn over the left shoulder resting on the right side; investiture of which is secret and confers great honor on the recipient. In this as indeed numerous other antient ceremonies, the Brahmin could enlighten us on the sacred "Triad."[38]

Greenlaw's opposing view was probably the dominant one, though.

By the mid-19th century men like Greenlaw were part of a global Masonic network—stretching from America to India and beyond—which disseminated the view of a single religion, "Christian" in its ethics, yet greatly antedating Christianity and actually connected with pagan religions, which had derived from the more ancient Masonic "true religion." Lodge lectures and Masonic journals were the media of transmission for this

[37] A.J. Greenlaw, *Masonic Lectures*, 181 (Lecture No. 8).

[38] Letter to editor, February 27, 1876, *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 12 (March 1876): 470-71.

powerful idea. As stated, George Bease, editor of the *Masonic Record of Western India*, promoted Greenlaw's book of lectures in his journal and occasionally even published individual lectures.[39]

Such calls by Greenlaw for a positive assessment of Hinduism, coming as they did from the English Constitution's District Grand Master of Burma (he also served in the District Grand Lodge of Madras), show that his ideas cannot be dismissed as marginal within the Masonic community of British India. They must have represented a majority view, or at least a large minority opinion. In the original 1870 edition of his lectures, Greenlaw linked his book, and by extension the ideas it contained, with the highest Mason in the land by dedicating it to Lord Mayo, "Viceroy and Governor-General of India, whose name has, for many years, been associated with Freemasonry, in Great Britain, and who is still intimately connected with the Order in the East, as Lord Patron."[40] (Back in Britain, Mayo had served as the Grand Lodge of Ireland's representative to the Grand Lodge of England, but had to resign this position when he left for India to take up the post of Viceroy.[41]) Indeed, the dedication was done "with permission" from Lord Mayo himself.[42] The second edition of Greenlaw's book, which came out in 1905, was dedicated by the publishers to another prominent Mason and British-Indian official: Lord Ampthill, Governor of Madras, "District Grand Master of Madras, Provincial Grand Master of Bedfordshire, Past Grand Warden of Mark Master Masons, etc., etc." These dedications, done with the approval of these rulers of the British Raj, would have suggested to the reader that such men—pillars of the Empire—were part of an imperial "cult," one which sought to bind the subjects of the British Empire together on a spiritual basis.

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[39] See, for example, *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 4 (July 1868): 132-36.

[40] A.J. Greenlaw, *Masonic Lectures*, iii. The District Grand Lodge of Bengal had adopted a proposition entreating Lord Mayo to be Patron of Freemasonry in India—see *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 11 (Feb. 1869): 402.

[41] *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 11 (Feb. 1869): 402.

[42] See *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 3 (June 1870): 83.

By the 1870s we find Indians themselves indulging in antiquarian speculation. In the November 1870 number of the *Masonic Record*, a full seven pages—an extremely generous allocation of space by Bease, the editor—is given over to a "Chapter on Metaphysics," authored by the deceased brother of a Parsi Mason (Cowasjee Meherwanjee Hattydaroo) who "for several years secluded himself in strict retirement, and devoted his time in putting together his ideas of what the world was composed, and the moral path to be followed by mankind."[43] Bease goes on to state that many "of the propositions advanced we have seen before, but taking it as whole, we think it will afford instruction to many, and stir up a spirit of inquiry."[44] Although the piece is a confusing jumble of Zoroastrian, Sufi, Christian, and Kabbalistic concepts, it is clearly informed by the synthetic perspective that is characteristic of all Theosophical Enlightenment literature.

IV. FREEMASONRY AND ARCHEOLOGY

A related discipline which could serve Masonic antiquarian researches was archeology. The implications of archeology for later Indian nationalism are obvious in hindsight—archeology reveals the hard facts of the nation's past thus reifying its primordial identity.

In the 19th century, Masons were intrigued with the archeological possibilities of an ancient land like India, perhaps inspired by the Archeological Survey of India, although with a twist:

> We have been told by many that throughout the length and breadth of the land are scattered *Masonic relics of great antiquity*, whose history, if traced and recorded, would furnish a series of curious and instructive details, well worthy of being known and preserved, and that they would throw considerable light *on many portions of Indian History* which are now enveloped in the dark fold of fable and mystery. We are inclined to believe these statements, and therefore recommend

[43] *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 8 (Nov. 1870): 289.
[44] Ibid.

> the subject to those who are best able to give it their attention. Our pages are always open to contributions of this description.[45]

Bease was primarily interested in exploring India's past in order to show the antiquity of Masonry, yet he recognized the implications of such research for the history of India, in and of itself. This Masonic project could have bolstered the up-and-coming archeological surveys being made in India by the "profanes" (or were they Masons, too?). This attempt at a kind of Masonic "Archeological Survey of India" could be used by Indians, especially Hindus, to provide themselves with a sense of national history. Moreover, the history that such discoveries could provide would have been one of an advanced civilization which knew the Mysteries, and had a high degree of technical proficiency (precisely because they had Masonry).

But Hindu nationalism was not the only possible beneficiary of this Masonic archeological impulse. Some twenty years earlier, a Mason writing from Meerut under the pseudonym, "A Rough Ashlar," reported in 1845 to the *Freemasons' Quarterly Review* of London on a visit to the Taj Mahal ("nothing can be conceived more exquisite than the pure white marble structure, and lovely minarets"), where he noticed in each marble block of the floor small characters, many of which had a Masonic significance. One such design, consisting of intersecting triangles (the "Star of David" design), "is common to both Mahomedans and Hindoos,"[46] thereby suggesting that Hindu and Muslim craftsmen shared a common language of symbolism, and that perhaps there were points of unity where the British saw only disunity. Here we see the archeological basis, albeit skimpy and ultimately abortive, for an Indian nationalism comprising both Hindus and Muslims. In 1892, John Yarker sent to the *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* in London, a scholarly Masonic journal, a number of Indian Masons' (operative) marks he had received from fellow Mason, Major J.H. Lawrence-Archer, which the latter had copied from the Taj.[47] These marks were presumed to be "under Moslem influence," though perhaps with

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[45] *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 11 (Feb. 1865): 402 (my italics).

[46] Letter dated May 1, 1845, in *Freemasons' Quarterly Review, 2nd series*, September 30, 1845: 319.

[47] See *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (London), vol. 5 (1892): 62.

Hindu forms as well, since Yarker also included "a purer system of Brahminical Caste Marks" which were found at Praj [Prayag?], and were "scattered over the ruined fanes of India."

Thus, for the most part, though, it was the cause of Hindu nationalism that was potentially and unwittingly being served by such discoveries. For example, in 1867, Bease began serializing from the Masonic *Bulletin du Grand Orient de France* a long essay by a French "brother" which described his investigation of a Roman site at Arles, in France, where Indian merchants apparently had done business in ancient times. The author argued that this site indicated, for the first time it would seem, "*the Indian origin* of European Freemasonry."[48] No wonder that Bease called it a "remarkable article... [which] will be specially appreciated by our brethren in India." In future issues of the *Masonic Record*, the author of the piece declared: "I will prove to you that this very temple [at Ellora] is incontestably the cradle of the Masonic Order,"[49] and concludes

> Surely everything we have pointed out concurs in proving that this hidden temple—this ancient excavation—this wonderful work of Viswâ-Karmâ,—is nothing more or less than one of the earliest meeting places of Freemasonry, even to the name remaining from the most ancient records of Ellora, of "Djoumprâ of Viswâ-Karmâ" or the hut of the architect of the Gods.[50]

A couple of decades later, Indians would be seizing upon ideas such as these (see the discussion of A. Sankariah's essay below).

Masonic archeological interest culminated, in 1867 or 1868, in the idea for a Masonic Archeological Institute, to be based in London. By 1868 various Masons, most of them also members of non-Masonic archeological, anthropological, and antiquarian

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[48] See *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 4 (April 1867): 123-25.

[49] *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 6 (Sept. 1867): 205. Interestingly, some years later, the Theosophists (of which more later) would give special attention to Ellora. See Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 300: "Ellora, the site of great caves and temples near Aurangabad, India, must have had some peculiar significance to these early Theosophists. In his letters to the Colonel [i.e., Henry Olcott], Serapis twice refers to Blavatsky as an "Ellorian."" Godwin apparently does not know that a number of Freemasons, from whom the Theosophists drew many of their ideas, had themselves been concentrating on Ellora as the cradle of the Masonic Order, as the above citation shows.

[50] *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 8 (Nov. 1867): 286.

societies of Britain, mostly, but also Latin America and Germany, agreed to form a council. George Bease urged the Grand Lodge of England to promote the institution.[51] By 1870 it was holding meetings, sometimes even with Indian Masons in attendance and responding to lectures. This indicates that Indians were already actively participating in this archeological/antiquarian project.[52] In 1875 it invited membership from Masons as far away as India, hoping that the Institute would "take its proper place among the Archeological and Scientific Societies of the world."[53] The prestige of the institution is indicated by the fact that among its council members was the Librarian to the Queen. In the invitation we read that scholarly papers could be submitted on:

> 1. The connection of Freemasonry with the calendar, religion, and symbols of prehistoric man.
> 2. Traces of Masonic symbolism in the Sacred Books of ancient nations.
> 3. The connection of Masonic symbols with the astronomic systems of antiquity, and with mythical or pre-historic chronology.
> 4. Traces of Freemasonry in the ancient Mysteries.
> 5. Traces of Freemasonry in the religions of antiquity, and in the traditions, symbols, religious rites, and systems of initiation among existing races of savages.
> 6. Connection of Masonic symbolism with the primeval traditions of our race respecting Paradise and the Deluge.
> 7. Connection of Masonic symbolism with the sacred structures of all ages.
>
> Besides the history of Masonry, ancient and modern, the Institute is prepared to have papers read and published upon symbolism in religion and art, the development and progress of architecture, the history of secret sects and brotherhoods, and similar subjects.[54]

These aims described the areas in which Masonic antiquarian study had been focusing for roughly a century.

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[51] *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 7 (Oct. 1868): 256.

[52] See, for example, *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 5 (August 1870): 171-72, where the subject of the June 9, 1870 meeting dealt with Freemasonry and Islam. A Muslim Indian Mason, Kazi Shahabuddin Ibrahim made some comments about Islam, and two Parsi Masons (Dadabhai Naoroji and Jamshedjee Jivanjee Gazdar) also commented.

[53] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June 1875): 129.

[54] Ibid., 130.

V. FREEMASONRY AND CHRISTIAN (UN)EXCEPTIONALISM

One important effect (or perhaps, goal) implicit in the Theosophical Enlightenment generally—and relevant to imperialism and Indian nationalism, in particular—was the downgrading of Christianity's status *vis-a-vis* other religions. The stage had been set in 18th-century Europe: "To attribute to pagan religions two of the central doctrines of Christianity, namely monotheism and the immortality of the soul, was a strategic move in the Enlightenment's campaign to strip Christianity of its pretensions to uniqueness. This was welcomed both by atheists... and by deists or pantheists...."[55] It was almost inevitable that antiquarian speculation and archeological research would compromise the privileged position of Christianity among Masons. But Masons could effect this directly, merely by implementing the fundamental teachings of the Craft which allow a person to be of any religion. In the early 19th century, the Grand Master of the English Constitution, the Duke of Sussex (a son of George III, and uncle of Victoria), strove hard and largely successfully to remove references to Christianity in the Craft's ritual.[56] After Sussex, the Christian character of British Freemasonry was much diminished (although some Christian references and symbols still remained, and certain higher-degree bodies chose to allow in only professing Christians). While Anglican clerics continued to join Freemasonry, Evangelical missionaries would not have joined, for its religious outlook was latitudinarian.[57] Latitudinarianism was a

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[55] Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 4. Of course, Freemasonry rejected atheism, but the Duke of Sussex, who in the early 19th century removed much of the Christian symbolism from the Craft, was a Deist.

[56] See Richard Sandbach, "Introduction," in George Oliver, *The Book of the Lodge*, 3rd ed. (Wellingborough, England: The Aquarian Press, 1986; first publ. 1864): xiv-xv. See also Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 216-17: The Duke of Sussex, "favoring Unitarian doctrine, did all in his power to remove the Christian grades from Freemasonry."

[57] See Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 66: "[I]t becomes possible to locate the intellectual and political origins of Grand Lodge Masonry more precisely, to see it as the project of a particularly religious-political grouping within English society known as latitudinarians."

> political-religious tendency within the Church of England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a time when religious and political positions implied one another. Theologically, the latitudinarians were moderate Protestants whose chief concern was to steer a middle course between Catholicism on the one hand and varieties of thought subversive of public order and Anglican authority (radical Protestantism, later atheism) on the other. Initially this was to be done through the medium of a doctrinally permissive Anglican Church, one that accorded a wide latitude in matters of ritual and belief as long as it was combined with a basic acceptance of the Church's authority.[58]

This latitudinarian tendency was taken even further in the society of Freemasons in the late 17th century than in British society at large: "In this context the masonic insistence upon religious toleration—'a mason is obliged... to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves.' [from Anderson's *Constitutions*]—stood in bold contrast to the discrimination imposed against Protestant Dissenters, Catholics, and anti-Trinitarians by law and custom."[59] With the antiquarian researches of Masons in the 18th and 19th centuries, latitudinarianism came to imply for them a general tolerance towards other religions, and the idea that all religions teach a common ethical system. Once it was recognized that Christianity would not be able to convert the non-Christian subjects of the Empire, a demotion of Christianity to parity with other religions would need to precede 19th-century British imperialism's search for unity on some other, and broader spiritual basis. No doubt for many who thought about it (and many did), something akin to Christianity but more universal and not requiring conversion would have been ideal. Masons claimed to have the answer all along.[60] In a letter to the *Masonic Record* in 1875, the writer, styled "Chameleon," sought to demonstrate the greater inclusiveness of Freemasonry in relation to Christianity:

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[58] Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood*, 66.

[59] Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 55.

[60] Masons are wont to say of Masonry that it "is a beautiful System of Morality, veiled in Allegory, and illustrated by Symbols"—G.H. Stapleton, *The Hand-book of Free Masonry*, 1. Even when the Enlightenment project turned thoroughly materialistic and completely dethroned Christianity, the ethical system of the Gospels could never entirely be dismissed, and indeed was maintained as an ideal, for example, in Saint-Simonianism and Marxism. In India, western-educated Indians, the most likely candidates for Freemasonry, also had no problem with the morality of the Gospels, and appear to have been influenced by them.

> There are not a few who object to Freemasonry on account of its very freedom, and although they would object to be considered bigots or uncharitable, yet they would feel themselves vastly polluted were they to worship the same God in a temple where the Hindu, the Chinese, the Mahomedan, and the Parsee meet on the same ground. "God is no respecter of persons," and will refuse no man's prayer because he is not a member of this or that communion.
>
> It is the fashion to condemn Masonry specially in that Christians never offer up their prayers to God in Lodge in the name of the mediator Jesus Christ. How indeed can they when in company with those that disbelieve in Him?....
>
> Certain of our Brethren entertain doubts of the unity of God the Father and God the Son, and therefore we retain the one name common to all creeds, by which each alike regard Him, and who is the Father of us all, God the Great Architect and Grand Geometrician of the Universe.[61]

Nor was this idea unique to India. In the *Masonic Record* for 1874 we find a piece from England (or America—a journal of the same name was published in both London and St. Louis in this period) which not only urges tolerance, since no one religion will ever succeed in converting everyone to it, but also stresses the absolute necessity of Freemasonry, because of its broad inclusiveness, claiming that it is a divine institution:

> All that man knows of God, teaches us that the Almighty works by natural means, and never by a miracle when natural laws will suffice. To make all men believe in one faith, whatever that faith may be, apart from a belief in Him, would be a miracle, because it would be overturning the foundations of man's free agency which is a law He established at man's creation, and which He guaranteed to Adam, in allowing him to choose between good and evil. Therefore, we do not find all men of one faith, nor do we find in any dogma that magnetic-like gravitation which draws all men together, and preserves those theological planets in perfect harmony. No. By the exercise of the noblest part of man's nature, and by making use of that one universal belief taught by all sects, God has supplied the grand necessity of human society, by inciting men to form a confraternity and

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[61] *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 9 (December 1874): 327-28. Interestingly, though, just prior to this letter, there is a two-and-a-half-page sermon by Rev. M.E. Mills, the Chaplain of Nagpur, to the members of Lodge *Corinth*, No. 1122, E.C., who had gathered in the All Saints Church of Nagpur on October 8, 1874, to commemorate the lodge's eighth anniversary. The minister declared: "The Masonic religious principle is, if I mistake not, to allow each member of the fraternity to enjoy his own opinion in matters of Faith; this being so, I am not, I conceive, transgressing any rule of your's [*sic*], when in this Temple of God, I call the attention of Christian Masons to the exceeding Love of God in sending His dear Son into the world to save you from your sins. Your own actions and words in your common Lodge, have the effect of riveting the bond of human love and fellow feeling between representatives of all creeds and nations as children of the one Great God and Father above; yet, as members of non-christian classes of Masons would in no way feel themselves bound by the religious opinions of Christians, so you... have the distinctive teaching of the Church of Christ" (ibid.: 325-26).

> mystery of association, whereby the representatives of all sects, all beliefs, and all dogmas may gravitate towards the common centre of all religions, God.
>
> We have studied for years to find in this age any other cohesive power to hold in equilibrium human association, and have looked in vain for any outside of Freemasonry.
>
> ....Can any church, can any other organization on earth say as much? Not one. Why? Because none are universal in belief, and yet co-extensive with mankind.
>
> To show that it is a *necessity*, just wipe out of existence the order of Freemasonry, Freemasons, their teachings and influences, as well as of those minor revolving orbs which have sprung from it, and where is the world? Hurled like an avalanche, the whole of human association will fly back to bigoted anarchy....
>
> .... [F]or without Freemasonry all variety of beliefs would soon be swallowed up by the sword of some dominant dogma or party. Freemasonry is the gravitating power which preserves in equilibrium the religious and conscientious liberties of all.
>
> .... We think we have fully but briefly answered the question, why so much labour and so much money are spent in Masonry. We think every reasonable mind must acknowledge its Necessity—a necessity that cannot be dispensed with until something better is created. [62]

If Freemasonry was a necessary divine institution was it then a religion? This contentious question plagues Freemasonry to this day, and there is no one answer. The distinguished American Masonic scholar, Albert Pike (1809-91), stated, in 1871: "Every Masonic lodge is a temple of religion, and its teachings are instructions in religion... this is true religion revealed to the ancient patriarchs; which Masonry has taught for many centuries, and which it will continue to teach as long as time endures."[63] For some this meant that Masonry was a religion in its own right; for others, that Masonry was religious but not a religion (and, for Christians, possibly a handmaid of Christianity); and, for others, that Freemasonry was the basis of all religion.[64]

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[62] "Freemasonry is a Divine Institution," from *The Freemason* magazine (London or St. Louis); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 2 (May 1869): 54-57.

[63] Albert Pike, comp. *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (Richmond, Virginia: L.H. Jenkins, 1918; first publ. 1871), 213-214.

[64] See Joseph Fort Newton, *The Religion of Masonry: An Interpretation* (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishing, Inc., 1927), 157: "It is rather difficult to arrange an adequate bibiliography of the relation of Masonry to Religion. Aside from debatable questions involved—such as, Is Masonry a Religion, or Is Masonry the Handmaid of Religion?—no two writers agree on the subject as a whole."

We see a mid-19th century expression of the first and third tendencies in a speech by the Deputy District Grand Master of Madras, Bro. Scharlieb, delivered at Bangalore in 1869:

> But the pure light of Speculative Freemasonry still remains to us—that *grand primeval and fundamental religion* by which we are inviolably attached to each other, and in which the whole family of man may harmoniously unite. Let us hold to this Light, and cultivate its pure and simple principles with undying attachment. Surrounded by the characteristic symbols of our Order, let us feel that we are members of the universal lodge of nature, with light for our centre and divine charity as our all-pervading principle of action....[65]

A late expression of the last tendency is represented by J.S.M. Ward (1885-?). Ward, a prolific Masonic scholar of the early 20th century, wrote on subjects dealing with Masonic administration, symbolism, ritual, history, and anthropology, all of which he embellished with his Masonic poetry. In *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*, first published in 1921, and re-published in 1926 (due to its popularity in the Masonic world[66]), Ward proposed a new methodology of Masonic research, which he tried to use in his book. This methodology—the "Anthropological School"—was to be based on field observations, making it distinct from what he called the "Authentic School," which he said relied on written documents. Ward argued that by "studying the customs of primitive man to-day we are able to reconstruct the life of prehistoric man, and so it will be with Freemasonry."[67] Ward's method of using field studies was anticipated by previous Masonic scholars, and was included in the aims of the Masonic Archeological Institute of the 1870s, but his call for a distinct discipline within Masonic scholarship to institutionalize that method was novel. In the end, though, in *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods* Ward ended up using much literary and archeological evidence, like so

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[65] Oration delivered by W.M. Scharlieb, Deputy District Grand Master, Madras, at the consecration of Lodge *Bangalore*, No. 1043 (E.C.), in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 7 (October 1869): 269 (my italics).

[66] This book, according to Ward, "*is* a masonic book, and it should not be treated with less care than a ritual; and I trust that it will only be given to brothers after due proof"—J.S.M. Ward, *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*, ix. Since I acquired this book through the University of California library system I feel I am not betraying any confidences in the discussion which follows.

[67] Ibid., vii.

many other Masonic authors before him. Building on those authors, while at the same time incorporating a new anthropological perspective,[68] Ward's thesis was that

> Freemasonry originated in the primitive initiatory rites of prehistoric man, and from those rites have been built up all the ancient mysteries, and thence all the modern religious systems. It is for this reason that men of all religious beliefs can enter Freemasonry.... Thus Freemasonry is the basis of the mysteries, not the mysteries cut down and mutilated.... Therefore it is that to this day... we can find in our ritual the seed of practically every important dogma of every creed, whether it be the Resurrection or Reincarnation; but so little developed that none need accept them, and so none can take offence. Only, no man can be a Mason unless he believes in God and a future life; for these are the bases of all religions, as ancient as man himself....[69]

In this massive work of 389 pages, Ward spans the globe, discovering the remnants of Freemasonic symbolism and teachings in ancient Egypt, Islam, the Greco-Roman world, Hinduism, hunter-gatherer African cultures, Australian aboriginal tribes, Judaism, the Medieval West, pre-Columbian Mexico, China, Easter Island, and more. The aim of all this is the same as Greenlaw's and others before him but, perhaps for the first time in Masonic literature, the anthropologically-minded Ward attempts to recount conversations with the adherents of these religions when he can, allowing their voices to be respectfully heard. Thus, he describes a conversation with the Brahmin priest of the Temple of Krishna on Dalhousie Street in Rangoon. When asked about the God who made him, the Brahmin tells Ward of the God behind the gods, "Brahm the Infinite, God the Unknown and Unknowable." Speaking of the incarnations of Vishnu, the Brahmin asserts that

> I have no quarrel with you Christians when you say that Christ was Incarnate God. For my part I have always thought that He was an incarnation of Vishnu sent to guide you Western folk into the road of peace. But I have a very bitter quarrel with them when they say that once and only once did God, the Infinite God, condescend to make Himself manifest to poor struggling man. Nay, I say that at countless times and in countless different countries the Preserver has become incarnate to help men on their way, choosing such conditions and giving them that

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[68] "Our main system is based on those which have been so successfully employed in recent years by the student of comparative religion, of folklore, and of anthropology.—Ibid., 339-40.

[69] Ibid., viii.

> teaching best suited for their advancement in that condition of social and spiritual development they had at that moment attained.[70]

Ward says, "as I left him I marvelled at those ignorant Europeans who would called such a man 'an old idolator.'" Indeed, Ward was so adamant in asserting the non-idolatrous nature of Hinduism that he felt moved to compose a sonnet about this exchange.[71] Ward clearly seems to attribute a superior wisdom to the Brahmin and his creed that does not limit the incarnations of God to just one, but instead adopts an evolutionary and gradualist approach to revelation, which thus requires multiple incarnations by the Divine. Ward's chiding of Europeans intolerant of other religions reminds us of a poem by another Mason, Rudyard Kipling, written perhaps three decades earlier: "Buddha at Kamakura" (1892). Throughout the poem, Kipling scolds arrogant Christian Westerners for mocking the religions of others, as a couple of stanzas will suffice to demonstrate:

> O Ye who tread the Narrow Way
> By Tophet-flare to Judgment Day,
> Be gentle when "the heathen" pray
>   To Buddha at Kamakura!....
> Yet Brahmans rule Benares still,
> Buddh-Gaya's ruins pit the hill,
> And beef-fed zealots threaten ill
>   To Buddha and Kamakura.[72]

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[70] Ibid., 42.

[71] See ibid., 38— "The Creed of the Brahman Priest of the Temple of Krishna, Rangoon":

> "I deem that God exists behind the Gods.
> So vast is He that my poor feeble mind
> Can never grasp Him wholly—Sahib nods?
> The God you own, O Sahib, is but, I find,
> A mighty man, most good and just and wise
> No doubt; our Gods I deem indeed exist;
> They shadow forth His attributes. Surprise
> Perhaps enfolds you, that we priests insist
> On this? but only so can man perceive
> In any measure what mankind must know,
> I find it not so hard you should conceive
> Your Christ to be incarnate God, for lo,
> I deem that Krishna oft hath walked the Earth,
> And, as your Christ, again proclaimed His birth."

[72] Rudyard Kipling, *Collected Verse of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1907), 10-11.

Ward's idea that Freemasonry derives from the religious rites of Paleolithic Man, and has been expressed in many forms, is strikingly prefigured in another Kipling poem—"In the Neolithic Age" (1895)—where a stone-age bard expresses the belief that truth can be found in other religions (represented by ritual tribal songs):

> Here's my wisdom for your use, as I learned it when the moose
> And the reindeer roared where Paris roars to-night:—
> "There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays.
> "And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right!"[73]

Beginning in the 18th century, Enlightenment science called into question the literalness of the Bible, which shook the faith of believers. As Western Christians moved into the non-Western world they encountered well-developed religions, many of greater antiquity than Christianity. Doubts began to be raised about the superior soteriological claims of the Christian faith. As a result, skeptical-yet-seeking Europeans yearned for something that would reconcile science with religion, and harmonize the competing truth-claims of the various religions, now brought into cheek-by-jowl proximity through imperialism and improved transportation. Ward's conversation with the Brahmin represents these self-doubts, for Hinduism is presented as offering humanity more chances at salvation than just the one, making it more benign than Christianity. Ideologically, the 19th century was a tumultuous time, and many people looked for certitude more and more in mysticism and the occult (for example, spiritualism). Freemasonry, with its claim to be the world's primordial religion, and favoring as it did modern progress, appeared to reconcile science and religion, and religion with religion. For Ward, "above all, the fact that in it [i.e., Freemasonry] men of every religion and creed find what is practically a religion which they can all accept is its greatest asset."[74]

The attempt at such extreme inclusiveness—what Masons called "universalism"—led to a reaction on the part of some Christian Masons who were

[73] Rudyard Kipling, *Collected Verse*, 233.
[74] J.S.M. Ward, *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*, 178.

unwilling to extend the principle of inclusion beyond the parameters of the "true faith." There had always been a dissenting voice: not all Christian Masons had agreed with the Duke of Sussex or were willing to jettison Christianity's superior status. They made sure to keep alive the question of the Christian character of Freemasonry.[75] To be sure, a Christian Mason could find in the lodge ritual much that he could interpret in a Judeo-Christian way, so he was not *forced* by the ritual itself to accept any downgrading of Christ to a level of parity with the founders of other religions. But as the Masonic "empire" expanded in lock-step with the British empire and came to include more men of non-Christian faiths, the Christian Mason who saw the Craft as a handmaid for Christianity was increasingly challenged.

In an article which appears in the *Masonic Record of Western India* for 1865, W.H. Hoff, editor of the Calcutta-based *Indian Freemasons' Friend*, responds to a letter dated December 1865 from a Christian Mason who wanted to know if it would be proper to introduce distinctly Christian expressions into the ritual of a lodge made up exclusively of Christian Masons:[76]

> It appears to us that it would not be consistent with the principle that Masonry is universal, which we are bound to uphold, if one body of Masons were to use the formula with which the prayers of Protestant Churches are usually concluded, while another invoked the names of the Mother of God and all the Saints, and a

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[75] See entry on Freemasonry in Edward L. Queen III, Stephen R. Prother, and Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *The Encyclopedia of American Religious History* (Boston: Facts on File, Inc., 1996), 241: "As a product of the moderate British Enlightenment, Freemasons believe in many of the same tenets of rational religion shared by many Episcopalians and Unitarians.... Freemason part company with Episcopalians, Unitarians, and all other Christians, however, in omitting the story of Jesus.... Nevertheless, a strong, though disguised Christian element can be found in the most sacred of Masonic stories, that of Hiram Abif, King Solomon's master builder, who is murdered for his virtue and miraculously resurrected. Masons also celebrate the holidays of the Christian saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, and there exists a Masonic subgroup (the Order of the Knights Templar) that explicitly reveres the Christian Trinity."

[76] The Christian Mason, who signed himself "Mortar," wrote "that our Saviour, whom the Patriarch looked forward to, and the Prophets foretold, and by faith in whom their souls, as much as those of the disciples of our Lord, were saved, is fully and distinctly referred to and acknowledged in every part of our ceremonies. The first clause of our Ancient Charges renders it essential that a Mason should 'believe in the Glorious Architect of Heaven and Earth.' A Mahomedan or a Jew Mason, not knowing in whom they believe, cannot have so distinct an idea of this condition of Masonry as a Bible Christian who reads the 1st chapter of John, and knows beyond doubt 'by whom all things were first made,' and 'for whose pleasure they are and were created.'"

> third appealed to the prophet of Allah. The Jew, the Turk, the Parsee, the followers of Carlyle the Rationalist and Emerson the Spiritualist, the Protestant, the Greek, the American, and the Roman Catholic, might all claim the privilege of introducing sectarian divisions into the Craft, by interpreting the types and symbols of Freemasonry, in their respective Lodges, each in accordance with his own theology. The effect would be like that of a match applied to a mine: the entire Society would explode and lie in fragments.... The very knowledge that one Brother could be a member of only a Christian Lodge, another of only a Jewish Lodge, and a third of only a Mahomedan Lodge, would cause a breach in Masonry.... [B]y the importation into our ceremonies of the anachronism of terms peculiar to the Christian dispensation, we should next be under the logical necessity of relinquishing the dogma of the origin of Freemasonry in times anterior to the incarnation of the Logos, to fling away the legend of the third degree, and to abolish the Royal Arch degree.[77]

Interestingly, Hoff declares that it is a Masonic dogma to believe that the Craft originated in pre-Christian times, thus placing such an assertion on the same level as the three basic Masonic principles of "Universal Brotherhood, Relief and Truth." Perhaps to conciliate Christian Masons, though, Hoff goes on to support the famous Masonic scholar and Anglican priest, George Oliver's, view of Freemasonry as a "handmaid" of Christianity, yet makes it part of the "esoteric" speculations all Masons are free to engage in (or not):

> It must be borne in mind that Freemasonry is not Christianity; but that, like of the preaching of John the Baptist, preparing the way of the Lord and making his paths straight, teaching the publican to be honest and the soldier to desist from oppression, it is the *handmaid* of Christianity. An Oliver may explore its recesses, and discover Christian truths interwoven in it. He may find in it the truths of a primitive revelation corresponding with those of recorded revelation.... But this is only the *esoteric* part of Masonry, which every one is at liberty to explore and interpret according to his own judgment. It is only the observance of *exoteric* Masonry which is imperative on all.[78]

The stress on orthopraxy (ritual activity) over orthodoxy and "esoteric" Masonic speculation is clearly an attempt to defuse religious conflict: for Hoff, the strength of Freemasonry to unite all men regardless of religious background lies in ritual practice—

[77] *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 12 (March, 1866): 447.
[78] Ibid.: 448.

the cultic act—not the cultic creed. Hoff's is a forceful endorsement of the universalizing "party line" established by the Duke of Sussex.[79]

Nevertheless, more than twenty years after Hoff's reply, a prominent "Christian" Mason in India, Henry Josiah Whymper, Past Deputy District Grand Master of Punjab (E.C.), published a dissenting tract, *The Religion of Freemasonry*, in which he attacked the claim that Masonry was, or should be, a universal system, and rejected the notion of Masonry's primordiality: "To be precise, Masonry may be and is Universal in this sense only—that it is to be found in every part of the habitable globe. In the same sense Christianity is Universal; because both Christians and Freemasons have settled everywhere; but neither the Society—nor the religion of which it is a handmaid, can be universally embracing, till all men are converted Christians."[80] Arguing that the Masons of early-modern England had no or little conception of non-Christians when they were formulating their ideas of universalism, and hence could not have imagined that the movement would include non-Christians, or that the British Empire would one day have two hundred million Asian subjects of various faiths,[81] Whymper was quite comfortable with the idea that Freemasonry should be able to exclude non-Christians to prevent its Christian message from being watered down in the cause of universalism: "But why should the Christian Mason abandon or shamefacedly hide his belief to gain a Hindu, or any other member, for the Craft? It is purchasing too dearly: it is creating contempt for our poltroonry: it is being false to all our professions, to in any way allow a shadow to overcast our Great Light [i.e., the Bible]."[82] Whymper laments that

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[79] I should add that this position still concerns many Christians—especially Fundamentalists—who accuse Freemasonry of denying the exclusiveness of Christ. And in America, for example, the National Christian Association was founded in 1867 to rid the nation of various fraternal orders and their rituals, whose source was identified as Satan—see Mark Carnes, "Iron John in the Gilded Age," *American Heritage*, vol. 44, no. 5 (Sept. 1993), pp. 37-44: 43.

[80] Henry Josiah Whymper, *The Religion of Freemasonry* (London: George Kenning, 1888), 190.

[81] Ibid., 257.

[82] Ibid., 190-91.

> on the one side the Christian refrains from speaking of Christ as his Saviour, and on the other hand our Hindoo brethren openly assert that Jesus Christ's position is on a mere level with "Zoroaster, Mahomed, Krishna, Rama, and others." It is not easy to discover what good has been wrought by this; the Christian is distinctly the sufferer by the result. He alone has abandoned his religion, whilst the brethren of all other beliefs have asserted theirs.[83]

Because of this ideological "relaxation of the Englishman," Whymper perceives a threat to the Craft:

> Whilst the Englishman is getting into doubt as to whether English Masonry has any definite sacred volume at all, and whilst in Masonic papers it has been discussed whether the English Book of Constitutions might not take the place of the Bible in a Lodge, the Indian Brother has shown a grasp of the situation by introducing, and obtaining recognition for, his sacred writings. To whatever extent he may be right or wrong in his acceptance of our Degrees, there can be no question as to the respect he is entitled to, for the consistent perseverance with which he upholds in Masonry what he deems to be due to his religion.[84]

It should be noted that Whymper is directing his comments primarily to Masons of the English Constitution (E.C.). In Scottish Constitution lodges in India the debate over the use of the Bible does not seem to have been a big concern (if it ever was in the English Constitution ones), the practice being that the Volume of the Sacred Law (V.S.L.) which would be placed open on the altar would be that of the presiding Master's religion. In the West, this would inevitably have been the Bible, but, in India, any variety of holy books.

Christian resentments regarding the respect accorded to other holy books in the lodges had been making themselves felt even earlier. In 1874 one Mason, in an attempt to counter the charges of upset "Cavillers and Renegade Masons" who were Christians, wrote a piece in the *Masonic Record* entitled "Is Freemasonry Incompatible With Christianity!"

> There are some who answer the question here propounded in the affirmative, and adduce several reasons, as they call them, for so doing; and principal among these,

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[83] Ibid., 205. The quote he gives is taken from the *MRWI*, vol. 15, pg. 91. Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain volumes 14 to 19, and so I cannot refer to the text of what looks like an interesting piece. In a footnote at the end of this passage, Whymper writes: "At Masonic meetings in Bombay the Grand Zendavesta Bearer, the Koran Bearer, &c., are often present, but not the Bible Bearer; if he be present the notices of the Scottish meetings are strangely silent regarding him."

[84] Ibid., 259-60.

> the fact that St. John's, or blue Masonry [i.e., the standard three-degree system of Masonry], does not admit the New Testament Scriptures into its ritual, while admitting the Koran of Mahomed, and Zend Avesta of the Parsee to be, to each sect or cultus, respectively, "the Volume of the Sacred Law;" therefore say they, Freemasonry is Anti-Christian.[85]

Although Whymper's concern was clearly not new, it was expressed within three years of the formation of the Indian National Congress, and uncannily parallels British suspicions of western-educated Indians, who were increasingly clamoring for a greater and more equitable role in running the Empire. His reaction also indicates that Indian Masons were seizing on the more latitudinarian tendency in Masonry to seek parity for their own religions *vis-a-vis* the religion of their British overlords. Such a parity would have undermined the religious justification for the British civilizing mission in India.[86]

As a compromise solution (because it turns out that he is not proposing to exclude non-Christian Masons altogether), Whymper suggests what in essence amounts to a Masonic "Communal Award," that is, that non-Christian Masons—many of whom he says already congregate in lodges in which members of a particular faith predominate—should have their own officially-sanctioned, religiously-based lodges:

> For a long series of years the existence of Mahommedan and Hindoo Lodges has been assumed.... Our proposal amounts to no more than this. Let that which has been supposed to exist, but which never has existed [officially], now be established.... It would not be inconsistent if to the original English Constitution there were attached a supplementary one, recognising in the fullest manner that there are now subjects of the Empire who cannot agree with the strict teaching of English Masonry, formulated, as it was, without a thought being given to them.[87]

As long as the right of visitation is continued among these sectarian lodges, says Whymper, the spirit of the Order would not be violated. For whatever reason (whether

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[85] "Is Freemasonry Incompatible With Christianity!" by "a Past Master," in *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 12 (March 1874): 451.

[86] Although it was usually not explicit after 1857, this religious justification was still an element in that civilizing mission. The popularity of J.N. Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India*, published in 1915, shows that the Christian missionary spirit was alive and well (and now quite sophisticated) at least up to the first World War, and that it perceived the Raj as a vehicle for Christianity.

[87] Henry Josiah Whymper, *The Religion of Freemasonry*, 256-57.

ideologically or racially motivated), Whymper is trying to contain the easy fraternization between the races and creeds in the Indian Empire which Freemasonry has given rise to.

It is unclear when Whymper was Deputy District Grand Master for Punjab, but his provocative ideas must certainly have caused controversy among Masons in that province. One wonders if there is any relation between Whymper's views and the following query put to the *Masonic Record* by the Master of an unnamed Punjabi lodge in 1873 (long after the Masonic community in Bombay had begun initiating Parsis and Muslims in 1844, and soon after Hindus had begun to be initiated in the Bengal and Bombay Presidencies in 1872):

> Dear Bro. Bease,—I should be so glad if any Brother would give me any information as to the true relation in which a Mahomedan stands to a Christian, not in relation to Christianity, but to Masonry. What I mean is, are there any valid reasons why a Mahomedan cannot become a Mason, and as such, recognize *all* other Masons as brethren, and yet be a true Mahomedan. To my mind this is a very important subject, particularly as I confess to believing that Masonry will be the real means of removing all race prejudices which exist between the two races. [signed] Punjab W.M."[88]

The Master himself is obviously well-disposed to the idea of letting Muslims in, so we may infer that other lodge members were against it—no doubt for religious, but perhaps for racial reasons, too. The ostensible grounds on which these Masons would have objected, though, is suggested by the response given by a lodge Master in Delhi, also under the jurisdiction of the District Grand Lodge of Punjab. He argues that "so long as a man continues a Mahomedan he *cannot* be a Mason. If it was *possible*, I believe Masonry might be made an immense power for good amongst Mahomedans."[89] He continues:

> In the 1st and 2nd degrees I see no objection to obligating a Mahomedan on the Koran, as the obligations are such as he can keep without transgressing its ordinances, but in the 3rd it is different, for surely to obligate a man to regard others as brothers on a book which instructs him to consider them as Kafirs and, as such, enjoins their destruction in case they obstinately refuse to submit to Islam, is surely something worse than a farce; it seems to me almost a blasphemy.

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88 *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 12 (March 1873): 447.
89 *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 2 (May 1873): 48.

> I know some people who would attempt to get over this by saying that *every* Mahomedan does not admit that *every* Christian is a Kafir, and, therefore, may look upon him as a brother without any transgression of his law; but how about our Hindoo brothers or even Parsees—is there *any* Mahomedan so liberal as to say they are not "Kafir,"... It is not that I think a Mahomedan may not be a good man, but to be a good Mason he must ignore the precepts of the Koran.[90]

The above objections (coming mainly from the Punjab, it would seem) are reminiscent of the objections Bengal Masons made to allowing Hindus into the Craft (see Chapter 3), since in both cases the charge is made that the Indians in question cannot espouse the principle of brotherhood due to their religious ideology (which they must be faithful to in order to be Masons!).

In a footnote, George Bease has the final word, though: "Our Correspondent must bear in mind that when Freemasons meet together, all religion is set aside; their only ambition being to prove their love to God and love to man." And on the page facing this correspondence—perhaps to bolster his argument—Bease inserts an essay by the American Masonic scholar, Albert Mackey, entitled "The Name of God: Its Real Masonic Import," in which Mackey discusses Islam at length in a positive light, drawing a parallel with Masonry:

> In the chapter of the Koran entitled *Araaf*, it is written: "God has many excellent names; invoke him by these names, and separate yourselves from them who give Him false names." The Mohammedans believe that God has ninety-nine names.... With them ALLAH is the *Ism al adhem*, the Great Name.... Like the Mohammedan *Ism Allah*, Freemasonry presents us as its most important feature with this science of the names of God....[91]

Even the redoubtable Prosonno Coomar Dutt, who had fought so long for the admission of Hindus and Muslims into Freemasonry in Bengal, weighed in:

> Dear Bro. Bease,—With reference to the inquiry by your correspondent "Punjab W.M." in your present number, regarding the admission of Mahomedans into the Masonic Society, I think your correspondent is not aware that there are numerous Mahomedan Brethren in different Lodges in India, and even in Europe, and yet they are true Mahomedans, and always welcome [*sic*] into their religious and social societies, and never had been excommunicated for joining the Fraternity.

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., 49 and 51.

> There was no objection whatever, neither is any at present, to initiate them into our mysteries.
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> His late Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex when Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England was present at the initiation of Mirza Abul who was made [a Mason] by the late Marquis of Hastings, and Omdit-ul-Omrah Bahadoor, eldest son of the Nabob of Arcot was initiated in India and received from the Grand Lodge a blue apron in the year 1776.
>
> Also in one of the ancient charges it is expressly stated that 'let a man's religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the Order, provided he believe in the Glorious Architect of Heaven and Earth, and practises the sacred duties of morality. [92]

To this letter, Bease pens an editor's note: "We know of several good and true Mahomedan Brethren, who have never been troubled by their community, but are as much respected, if not more so, than before they became Masons...."[93] Bease's position was clear, and had been consistent: some years earlier, in 1869, he had prefaced a poem by an American, W. Ross Wallace, entitled "El Amin—Mahomet," saying: "The religious character of the Asiatic Prophet is a subject of interest to Masons, since his followers claim to be entitled to receive the benefits of Masonry, and we admit the claim, inasmuch as they believe in one ever living and true God. The poem asserts this belief in positive terms."[94]

Despite reactionary attitudes on the part of staunchly Christian Masons (or anti-Muslim Masons), the trend towards catholicity and universalism in religion and race was unstoppable in British Masonry by the last quarter of the 19th century. Whymper's attempt to reverse the course he saw Masonry taking in the Indian Empire, and thus to formalize "difference," was ignored. Even the author of the introduction to his book, the Past Senior Grand Deacon of England, E. J. Hughan, disagreed with Whymper about the Christianity of Freemasonry and his notion of religiously-based lodges. "We meet on the *Level* or not at all," Hughan declares, and "if we cannot as votaries of various Faiths

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[92] Prosonno Coomar Dutt to George Bease (Editor), March 18, 1873; *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 1 (April 1873): 8b. He was then Junior Warden of Lodge *Anchor and Hope*, No. 234 (E.C.)

[93] Ibid.

[94] *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 9 (December 1869): 344.

become members together in Lodge" Masonry will cease to "illustrate the 'Brotherhood of Man.'"[95]

This de-Christianizing tendency was promoted in the poems and stories of Masons—such as Kipling—and also in lodge lectures. But it was a tendency in evolution. A mature expression of it is Col. R.H. Forman, a founding member of the aptly named Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041 (S.C.),[96] and the Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India. In a talk to his lodge on Sept 8, 1909, Forman explicitly attacks what he sees as the ongoing influence of Christianity upon Freemasonry:

> As I have already said, this bias towards Christianity is still in evidence to some extent, and it is wrong that it should be so; but I venture to hope, that the spread of Freemasonry in the East during the last century, *or rather, its revival there*, together with the light thrown upon Christian dogma in recent years by what is termed the Higher Criticism, combined with an ever widening tolerance will, in due course of time free it from all trace of Sectarianism and restore, in its original purity, that Universality which is, at once, one of the most ancient of the landmarks and one of the most proudly cherished traditions of the Order.[97]

Forman goes on to say that "in the West, resultant of sacerdotal impress, there has been a tendency to substitute the Bible for the V. of the S.L. [i.e., Volume of the Sacred Law, the Masonic term for a religion's holy book]. It is not the V. of the S.L., though it is part of it, any more than the Bhagavad Gita, the Zend Avesta, or the Koran are, though they also are equally parts of it."[98] At the same time, Forman asserts one thing more: that Freemasonry alone has preserved pure and unsullied the fundamental truths of one God and Man's immortality, "whereas, all the great religions, although based upon the same

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[95] E.J. Hughan, "Introduction," in Henry Josiah Whymper, *The Religion of Freemasonry*, v-vi. One must commend Whymper here for allowing such a dissenting opinion to commence his book: it is a wonderful example of the tolerance among Masons for those who hold opposing views!

[96] This lodge was founded in 1908 and included a number of the leading men of Bombay of all ethnic and religious backgrounds.

[97] *Lodge "Imperial Brotherhood," No. 1041, S.C., Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1908-1958* (Bombay: printed by V. D. Limaye at the India Printing Works, 1958), 46 (my italics).

[98] Ibid., 50. This view is uncannily similar to the concept of the "Mother Book" in Islam, of which the various revelations sent down to the Prophets are but chapters, and it certainly would have run counter to standard Christian views of the Bible in relation to other holy books.

great truths, have allowed them to become obscured, and have degenerated into the worship of dogma."[99] The argument for the purity of Freemasonry had previously only been made in relation to pagan religions, which had all become "spurious" through admixture with idolatry. Now, *all religions*, even the monotheistic ones, were no longer as pure as Freemasonry, for all had degenerated into dogmatism, and had thereby beclouded the pure truths they shared with Freemasonry. Whereas the latitudinarianism of two centuries earlier was an attempt to opt out of committing to any sectarian dogma within Christianity, Forman's statement seems to dismiss Christianity itself, implicitly urging, instead, initiation into Freemasonry.

Justice Raymond Knight of the Bombay High Court, another founding member of the lodge, in a speech in Dec. 1909, echoes Forman's talk in general, without explicitly agreeing with his view of the established religions: "I would class the Implications of Freemasonry under three heads. The first... is the fundamental equality of all religions.... [m]erely remarking that... this postulate is but a recognition that all religions are a presentment of the one Central Truth—a primary postulate that no Freemason will call in question." Knight and certain other members of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* were also Theosophists, and so it becomes necessary to investigate this movement in the light of Freemasonry.

VI. FREEMASONRY AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The last important phase of the Theosophical Enlightenment is represented by the Theosophical Society, founded in New York City in October 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Capt. Henry Steel Olcott, a prominent lawyer, journalist, and erstwhile Civil War officer who became the first President of the Society. As Joscelyn Godwin points out (see above), the Theosophical Enlightenment was intimately connected with, and its ideology disseminated by, Freemasons and Freemasonry. In India, the

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[99] Ibid., 51.

Theosophical Society joined Freemasonry in disseminating Theosophical Enlightenment ideas to Indians and in affirming the validity of Indian religions from the perspective of modern science. In this, the Theosophical Society had the advantage of being dedicated almost exclusively to such ideas, whereas Freemasonry was a more broad-based organization, and dealt with many issues at once, such as Masonic law and constitutions, correct ritual practice, the inculcation of virtues in its members, etc., in addition to antiquarian, occult, and religious speculations. Historians of India have given the Theosophical Society and its leaders an important place in the formation of modern Indian nationalism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as a result of their attempt to foster in Indians pride for their ancient culture and religion (especially among Hindus, but also Parsis and, in Ceylon, Buddhists). However, the Theosophical Society's close connections with Freemasonry have not really been explored by these historians, which may be yet another reason that Freemasonry has been ignored in the historiography of modern India.

A. Influences:

According to Bruce Campbell, the "occult tradition has had an importance in Western history which is often not recognized."[100] Occultic speculation and movements became increasingly popular in 18th-century Europe and then proliferated greatly in the 19th century. This was a period before modern science became strictly materialistic, as it did in the 20th century; hence, spiritual and occult explanations were not deemed unscientific out of hand. Since Western imperialism in the 19th century dominated much of the globe, any history of the planet during that period would be incomplete without an analysis of such occultic movements—movements which captured the imagination of rulers and bourgeois alike, and, more importantly, of colonizer and colonized alike. Freemasonry was the seminal movement for 19th-century occultic thinkers, for it not only

[100] Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 13.

gave rise to, but also absorbed, new occultic practices: for example, mesmerism and Swedenborgian thought.[101] Freemasonry also produced "spin-offs" which might have no official connection with Masonry, or which became "higher-degree" bodies within the Masonic "family." Membership in these bodies usually required one to have previously acquired the first three degrees of regular Masonry.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), whom Campbell considers "the father of modern occultism," because of his pervasive influence on 19th-century spiritualism, "wrote many works of theology and scriptural exposition in which he developed the idea of correspondences: that there are higher, invisible analogues of visible things," which could be linked to visible things with a mathematical and scientific exactitude.[102] This desire to give scientific validity to spiritual or religious experience is a characteristic of the Theosophical Enlightenment, and shows up in Masonry and later in the Theosophical Society, as well as movements of religious reform in India (see chapter 5). Swedenborg's teachings "did away with the literal interpretation of the Bible and the doctrine of the Atonement. He accepted pre-Christian revelations, praised Mohamed, and detested the Catholic Church."[103] When Swedenborg left his homeland in 1710, after his graduation, he spent two years in London and Oxford, "probably joining a Jacobite masonic lodge."[104] By the late 18th century (1783) a "Swedenborgian Rite of Freemasonry" had evolved in Paris as a higher-degree body, whence it quickly spread to England.[105]

The fascination with Swedenborg traveled far beyond the West in the 19th century, most likely through the vehicle of Freemasonry. In 1878, Dadoba Pandurang—who was central to a number of socio-religious reform movements in Bombay, and whose

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101 Indeed, in its ritual, the "gnostic form of the brotherhood's practice raises the question of Freemasonry's connection with the occult"—See entry on Freemasonry in Edward L. Queen III, *et al*, *The Encyclopedia of American Religious History*, 242.

102 Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, 14.

103 Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 97.

104 Ibid.

105 Ray V. Denslow, *Masonic Rites and Degrees* (Trenton, Missouri: self-published, 1955), 246. See also Godwin, 103.

brother was a Freemason—wrote a 94-page book dedicated to the president and members of the Swedenborg Society in London, entitled *A Hindu gentleman's reflections respecting the works of Swedenborg and their doctrines of the new Jerusalem church.*[106]

In addition to mesmerism and Swedenborgism, Rosicrucianism influenced Freemasonry and, through it, the Theosophical Society: "Both Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism combine an esoteric approach to religion, religious tolerance, an emphasis on good works, and an attachment to Egyptian symbolism."[107] Indeed, "Rosicrucianism almost completely disappeared in the eighteenth century, but in the nineteenth century was a major component of the occult revival in the West. It emerged out of Masonry."[108] Rosicrucianism bears similarities to both Masonry and the Theosophical Society, although for different reasons.

Rosicrucianism emerged in early 17th-century Germany as a survival of Hermetic occultism. The most important Rosicrucian treatise of that period, the *Fama Fraternitatis*, "told of a secret brotherhood founded by Christian Rosenkreutz, a noble German youth who had traveled widely and studied occult lore. The brothers, or 'adepts,' were mysterious persons who possessed superior knowledge or powers,"[109] and whose goal was to bring mankind back to a "Paradisal state." Only recently has it been discovered that Rosicrucian tracts were actually "a means for a group of Lutherans to present an apocalyptic message of universal reform. They formulated a Pansophia or theosophy, which they hoped might serve as a nonsectarian foundation by which people of differing religious views could live peacefully."[110]

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106 Dadoba Pandurang, *A Hindu gentleman's reflections respecting the works of Swedenborg and their doctrines of the new Jerusalem church. Being a letter ... to the president and members of the Swedenborg Society, London* (London: J. Speirs, 1879; published first in Bombay, 1878).
107 Bruce Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, 12.
108 J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986), 69. For full entry on Rosicrucians, see pp. 68-75.
109 Bruce Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, 11-12.
110 Ibid., 12.

Many sought to find and join this elusive brotherhood. The philosopher Descartes supposedly looked for these "adepts" but never found them.[111] Another was the English antiquarian Elias Ashmole, "who was also a charter member of the Royal Society and one of the first two gentlemen recorded as being initiated into a Masonic lodge."[112] One theory to explain the difficulty in finding the adepts was that they had moved to India or Tibet. Rosicrucian groups emerged in the 18th century, and the movement "was popularized in the nineteenth-century fiction of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton [himself a Mason].... Bulwer-Lytton presented Rosicrucianism as a remnant of an ancient lost wisdom associated with the Chaldeans."[113]

The idea of a brotherhood which possessed mysteries is common both to Freemasonry and to the teachings of H.P. Blavatsky. For Blavatsky, the "Adepts" or "Masters" were thought to be headquartered in Tibet. In an 1882 article for the *Theosophist* magazine entitled, "A Flash of Light upon Occult Freemasonry," submitted by A. Sankariah, a Fellow of the Theosophical Society—and also Deputy Diwan ("Naib Devan") of the Princely State of Cochin—the editor (presumably Madame Blavatsky)[114] inserts a comment which shows the Society's Rosicrucian inheritance:

> European and even Hindu students of Occultism are often deploring and even wondering, why all the "Initiates" or "adepts" seem to have died out in India? They have not "died" out, nor, is their absence due to "Kali Yug" as popularly yet erroneously supposed. The "adepts" have simply and gradually if not altogether forsaken India, at least retired from its public populated portions, keeping their knowledge and often their very existence as secret as they can. Many of them are gone beyond the Himalayas. Some yet remain—especially in Southern India, but few are the privileged ones who know of them; still fewer those who could point out their places of retreat.[115]

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[111] See Alexander Wilder, "The Brethren of the Rosy Cross," *The Theosophist*, vol. 1, no. 5 (February, 1880): 108-11.

[112] Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood*, 59.

[113] Bruce Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, 12.

[114] From October 1879 to September 1888, Helena P. Blavatsky was the magazine's editor, and from October 1888 to February 1907, the editor was Capt. Henry S. Olcott.

[115] See editor's note in A. Sankariah, "A Flash of Light upon Occult Freemasonry," *The Theosophist*, vol. 3, no. 5 (February, 1882): 135.

Masons, by contrast, generally thought of themselves as that primitive brotherhood which had preserved the ancient secrets. In the above article, Sankariah, in true antiquarian fashion, writes that the "Masonic Institution was wide-spread in India in ancient days and cherished by the Initiated *in secret*, if indeed India was not the Parent of all Freemasonry in the world [and the editor adds: "Which—we have strong reason to believe—it was."].... The Rishis of the Vedic school were, of course, also Founders of the Masonic."[116] This is a clear attempt to use antiquarianism to appropriate Freemasonry to ancient Hinduism, and make the Vedic Rishis the earliest exponents of the Craft. The colonized is attempting to alter the moral relations between him and the colonizer by placing the origin of the West's most cherished and venerable organization (after the Church) in India. Moreover, he is supported by the editor of the *Theosophist*—a Westerner. This is nearly identical to statements in the *Masonic Record of Western India* from 1867, which posited an Indian origin for Freemasonry (see above), but now such ideas are also being disseminated by Theosophists.

B. Ideology:

At the first regular meeting of the Theosophical Society in November 1875, Henry Olcott, the President, "defined the purpose of the new group in a way that distinguished it from established religion and science.... He also distinguished Theosophy from spiritualism.... [being instead] concerned with ancient wisdom.... [and] the 'primeval source of all religions.'"[117] For Olcott, the group's purpose was mainly one of investigation. Later, ideas of initiation and lodges, as "developed by the Masons,"[118] would be used by the Society. The movement attempted to "transcend the cleave between science and religion by a return to the concerns of an ancient wisdom-tradition, long forgotten."[119]

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[116] Ibid. (italics in original; my underscore).
[117] Bruce Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, 29.
[118] Ibid., 12. See also, Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood*, 60.
[119] Bruce Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, 12.

The influence of Freemasonry on the Theosophical Society in a variety of areas is clear. This was only to be expected, for, according to Joscelyn Godwin, for Freemasonry permeated the atmosphere of occult circles and affected all who traveled in them.[120] Helena Petrovna Blavatsky herself, although not a Mason (because a woman), nevertheless, in her travels in the Middle East, India, Europe, and America, was "[e]verywhere... involved with Freemasonry, Oriental secret societies, occult fraternities, and with spiritualists who constituted, as it were, the exoteric 'church' from which doors opened to the more esoteric circles."[121] Moreover, the president, Olcott, was already a Freemason when he got involved with Madame Blavatsky in New York in the 1870s, as was George Felt, one of the two vice-presidents, and Charles Sotheran, the Society's librarian.[122] Blavatsky, although a woman and therefore ineligible to join the Craft, was well-respected by high-grade Masons in America and Europe for her expertise in Masonry.[123]

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[120] See Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, chap. 14 (pp. 277-306).

[121] Ibid., 281.

[122] See Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived*, 7, 26, and 27.

[123] Due to the publication of her book, *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky was given a high-grade rank in "Adoptive Masonry" (see below) in England in a somewhat unorthodox procedure. One member of her inner circle in New York, Charles Sotheran, "was a high grade Mason and a member of the English Rosicrucian Society who worked as editor of the *American Bibliopolist*, a literary register and monthly catalog of old and new books." Sotheran had written enthusiastically of Blavatsky to his fellow Masons in England, including the doyen of "fringe" Masonry in England, John Yarker, the Sovereign Grand Master-General of the Ancient and Primitive Rites of Memphis and Mizraim. In recognition of the erudition displayed in *Isis*, Yarker sent Blavatsky the certificate of the highest rank of Adoptive Masonry, that of a Crowned Princess. The Rite of Adoption was an offshoot of the Rites of Memphis and Mizraim created for the wives and daughters of prominent Masons, and Sotheran solemnly informed the readers of the *Banner of Light* journal: "'No higher mark of Masonic honor could be confered upon a woman, and its bestowal should be remembered by the craft as a historical event of importance.'" When her fitness to receive these degrees was questioned, Yarker stated, "'I gave to Madame Blavatsky no degrees beyond what she was entitled to receive by all international rules and regulations of what is called high-grade Masonry. At the same time I am quite well aware that from older sources she was in possession of much that was not given by myself'"—Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987), 156-57. In a similar move, the same John Yarker, on Feb. 16, 1882, admitted Prosonno Coomar Dutt, the "first Hindu Mason," into the "33° of Antient and Primitive Rite, 90° of Mizraim Rite, and 95° of Memphis Rite, under the Sovereign Sanctuary of Great Britain and Ireland," of which John Yarker was the head. In March of that year, Dutt was "installed Most Wise Sovereign, Sublime Grand Commander, and Sub-Dai" of the rite—*How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry* (Calcutta: Victor Printing Works, 1900), 60. *Da'i*, in "Sub-Dai" seems to be taken from the term to denote a caller of a Sufi prayer circle.

Where Freemasonry had the three cardinal "principles" of Brotherhood, Relief (Charity), and Truth, the Theosophical Society had three "objects":

> I. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color;
> II. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
> III. The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

According to Godwin, the mission of the TS' founders was to "correct the misapprehensions of spiritualism, to expand the horizons of science, and to oppose dogmatic Christianity." While the means to do this were drawn from Egyptian occultism and the Western esoteric tradition, "there was a brooding presence in the background of India and of an Oriental wisdom that surpassed that of the West."[124]

In theory, the speculations and musings of Theosphical Society leaders were not to be considered inspired or authoritative. However, it was inevitable that the prestige and erudition of leaders like Blavatsky gave their ideas a special status in the minds of members of the Theosophical Society, and, in the case of Blavatsky herself, her ideas were the ones on which the Society had been founded. Moreover, visits and messages to Blavatsky and Olcott by "Adepts" who were otherwise in occultation lent the leaders' decisions and ideas an aura of authority which could not easily be disputed.

C. Structure of the Theosophical Society in India:

Founded in late 1875, the Theosophical Society developed an expanded set of "Principles, Rules, and Bye-Laws" at a meeting held at the palace of the Maharaja of Vizianagram in Benares on 17 December 1879. These were revised and ratified in February 1880,[125] and strongly bear the impress of Freemasonry. The Society was formed "upon the basis of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity" and was divided for administrative purposes into local branches. The whole society was placed under a

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[124] Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 307.

[125] "The Theosophical Society, or Universal Brotherhood," in *The Theosophist*, vol. 1, no. 7 (April, 1880): 179-180.

General Council with a President (by unanimous vote of the Council, Helena P. Blavatsky was to be the President for life), and the Society, "being a Universal Brotherhood... established in widely separated countries and cities in both hemispheres," was divided into "Branches" which—after the fashion of Masonic lodges *vis a vis* Grand Lodges—derived "their chartered existence from the Parent Society" and were to be "subordinate to its authority, without which no Branch can be formed." Although part of a universal brotherhood, each Branch was allowed (if it wanted) to be composed "solely of co-religionists, as for instance, Aryas, Buddhists, Hindus, Zoroastrians (or Parsis), Christians, Mahomedans, Jains, etc.—each under its own President, Executive Officer and Council."[126]

The early Theosophical Society, like Freemasonry, initiated its members and had three degrees: the Third and lowest, the Second, and the First and highest "Sections." Persons "of either sex or any race, colour, country, or creed" were eligible for initiation into the Third Section, and could be admitted upon the endorsement of two Theosophists, and the payment of an initiation fee. Once initiated, the new Theosophist was to be

> invested with the secret signs, words, or tokens by which Theosophists of the third (probationary) Section make themselves known to each other, a solemn obligation upon honour having first been taken from him in writing, and subsequently repeated by him orally before witnesses that he will neither reveal them to any improper person, nor divulge any other matter or thing relating to the Society, especially its experiments in Occult Sciences, which it is forbidden to disclose. Admission to fellowship in the Parent Society carries with it the right of intercourse, with mutual protection and fellowship, in either of the Branches....[127]

The resemblance to Freemasonic initiation—the requirement of an endorsement, the teaching of secret modes of recognition, the right to call on any other member for assistance once one has been "made," etc.—would be remarkable if not for the fact that Olcott was a Mason and Blavatsky a scholar of Masonry. The Theosophists also had a

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[126] Ibid.: 179.
[127] Ibid.: 180.

ban on divulging the Society's occult practices and experiments which is not unlike the ban on revealing Freemasonry's secret rituals. While membership in the Theosophical Society was supposed to confer on one the right to ask a fellow member for aid in times of distress, this altruistic sentiment does not seem to have evolved in the Society to a degree anywhere near what it did among Masons. Freemasonic lore is replete with stories of Masons in distress being aided by fellow Masons or by peoples who had inherited some aspect of the "ancient religion" (i.e., Masonry) in their own religious tradition, and who therefore recognized the ritual signs of modern Masons in distress:

> is a duty which every man owes to his fellow-man, in consideration of the common infirmities of human nature; but stronger is the claim of those to whom we are voluntarily and reciprocally pledged in the bond of brotherly love and affection, and therefore unquestionable is the right of Masons to rely upon each other for succour in the hour of need, by pecuniary aid, or by procuring assistance, advice, and protection, according to their relative circumstances and conditions in life.

When the *Theosophist* journal is compared to the *Masonic Record of Western India*, it becomes apparent that while both are collections of a plethora of articles on antiquarianism, religion, and science, the *Masonic Record* also carries many articles on Masonic administration, morality, and brotherly love, which seem to be lacking in the former journal. The influence of Freemasonry on 19th-century Western spiritual formulations was ubiquitous and fundamental. Indeed, the leaders of the Theosophical Society saw themselves as carrying on the Masonic "project."

D. H.P. Blavatsky and "Esoteric" Freemasonry:

In an article entitled "The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry," first published in 1889 in the *Lucifer* magazine,[128] H.P. Blavatsky traces the history of modern Masonry from Hellenistic mystery cults, saying that Masons in ancient times called themselves by various names, and that most of the Alexandrian Eclectics, the

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[128] This was the journal of the "Esoteric Section" of the Theosophical Society which Blavatsky led when she permanently quit India for England in the late 1880s, leaving Olcott behind as head of the "Exoteric Section."

Theosophists of Ammonias Saccas, and the later Neo-Platonists, "were all virtually Masons. They were all bound by oath to secrecy, considered themselves a Brotherhood, and had also their signs of recognition."[129] Their doctrines, Blavatsky says, were "adopted by pagans and Christians in Asia and Europe, and for a season everything seemed favourable for a general fusion of religious belief," that is, until the Christian Church, excited by jealousy, struck back. Blavatsky goes on to say that

> ancient and modern Freemasonry are an obligatory study with every Eastern Occultist.... Masonry, its paraphernalia and modern innovations (the Biblical Spirit in it especially) notwithstanding, does good both on the moral and physical planes.... It was a true *ecclesia* in the sense of fraternal union and mutual help, the only *religion* in the world, if we regard the term as derived from the word *religare*, "to bind" together, as it made all men belonging to it "brothers"—regardless of *race* and *faith*. Whether with the enormous wealth at its command it could not do far more than it does now, is no business of ours.[130]

After declaring Masonry necessary to the study of Eastern religion and its symbolism, and calling it the only true religion of the world (she later links it to the Eleusinian Mysteries, the "religion of mankind"), Blavatsky jibes Masons for not using their present power and wealth to promote brotherhood more than they do. She goes on to suggest two classes of Masons: what she calls the "Builders of the higher, or City Temple," that is, most regular Craft Masons—what may be called the "exoteric" Masons—and the "esoteric" Masons represented by Blavatsky and the other members of the Theosophical Society, who have knowledge of mysteries which, "unless a Mason studies *true* theosophy, is lost to him for ever."[131] Although the denigration of "regular" Craft Masonry is never made explicit, she does say that Masons "will pooh-pooh and scorn any one among their own brethren who will remind them of their true origin."[132] The message is a clear one: Masons should

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[129] Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, "The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry" (Los Angeles: Theosophy Company, 1971), 27. Originally published in *Lucifer* for March and May, 1889.
[130] Ibid., 12 (italics in original).
[131] Ibid., 15.
[132] Ibid., 29.

study Theosophy to get back to the original mysteries of their movement. But Blavatsky is also inextricably linking the TS to Masonry as the true essence of the latter movement.

Similar Masonic histories existed within Masonry itself, though. For example, in May 1875, at the consecration of Lodge *Salem*, No. 563 (S.C.), in Ahmedabad, Henry Morland, Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, delivered a speech tracing the history of Freemasonry, in which he states that

> The principles of Freemasonry are... coeval with the creation of man.... The whole system of these ancient mysteries are doubtless those from which the present organization of the Institution of Freemasonry takes its rise—they used in their ceremonials many of our emblems—and similarly had a universal language—available whether in light or in darkness to distinguish members scattered over India, Persia, and Syria; and to unite them in one common bond of brotherhood—more perfectly taught and trained in science and art than the outside world could be.[133]

This, too, is merely a late expression of James Anderson's history of Freemasonry in his *Constitutions* of 1723 (see above).

E. The Theosophical Society and Co-Freemasonry:

The Theosophical Society's fascination with Freemasonry did not end with Blavatsky and Olcott, but continues up to the present day. Although amendments were soon made in December 1879 and February 1880 introducing an initiation procedure for membership in the Thesophical Society, and the afore-mentioned three "Sections" resembling Freemasonry's three degrees were also added, the movement does not seem to have instilled the same sense of ritual bonding in its members as did Freemasonry. The Theosophical Society seems to have been unable to shift from being an organization devoted to the investigation of comparative wisdom religions and the occult to becoming a fraternal society. This lack was remedied through the introduction of Co-Freemasonry into India by leaders of the Theosophical Society.

The Co-Masonic movement—also known as "Grande Loge Symbolique Ecossaise de France, Le Droit Humain"—is a heterodox Masonic order which began in France in

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[133] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June 1875), 109.

the late 19th century. It differs from regular Masonry mainly in that it permits the initiation of women. The Co-Masonic Order confers not only the normal three "Craft" degrees, but also higher degrees, all under one administration. According to John Yarker, Co-Masonry "works the Craft degrees under the Ritual of the Grand Lodge of England [i.e., York Rite], and at the present time has numerous adherents and Lodges. It has added only to the Ritual a 'Dharma' Lecture which compares Masonry with secret societies of India...."[134] Of course, Masons themselves had been making such connections for a long time, showing, for example, that the Thugs represented a "spurious" Masonry.

Sometime in the 1890s, the parent body in Paris conferred upon Annie Besant (1847-1933) authority over all Co-Masons in the Eastern Administration of the British Federation, a region which included India, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand.[135] It wasn't until 1903, though, that Besant actually introduced Co-Masonry to India, at Benares. A biographer of Besant states that "as this was also alien to the Society over which Henry Olcott still presided,"[136] she was cautious about when and where to introduce it. Why this should be the case, since Olcott was a Mason himself, is unclear. Perhaps, as a "regular" Mason, he viewed the movement as heterodox. In 1907, Besant succeeded Olcott to the leadership of the Theosophical Society, and thereafter it became customary for the President of the Theosophical Society also to be the head of the Co-Masonic Eastern Administration of the British Federation (now the Eastern Federation of Co-Masonry), and this tradition has continued to the present: Mrs. Radha Burnier is currently the head of both movements.

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[134] John Yarker, *The Arcane Schools: A Review of Their Origin and Antiquity; With a General History of Freemasonry, and its Relation to the Theosophic, Scientific, and Philosophic Mysteries* (Belfast: William Tait, 1909), 534.

[135] *The Morning Star, Journal of the Eastern Federation, International Co-Freemasonry (Le Droit Humain)* (Special centenary number, 1993), vol. 59, nos. 1-3 (January-December, 1993): 9.

[136] Anne Taylor, *Annie Besant, A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press, 1992), 283.

Besant's partner in the leadership of the Theosophical Society, Charles W. Leadbetter (1847-1934), was originally an Anglican Bishop who came to India in 1884. He became a member of the Theosophical Society in 1883, and a Co-Mason in 1915.[137] Leadbeater also wrote two books on Masonry, *The Hidden Life in Freemasonry*, and *Glimpses of Masonic History*. In Besant's introduction to *The Hidden Life in Freemasonry*, she writes of Leadbeater, "True Mason that he is, he is ever trying to spread the Light which he has received, so that it may chase away the darkness of Chaos. To look for the Light, to see the Light, to follow the Light, were duties familiar to all Egyptian Masons, though the darkness in that Ancient Land never approached the density which enshrouds the West to-day."[138] Leadbeater writes:

> Although the book is primarily intended for the instruction of members of the Co-Masonic Order, whose desire, as is expressed in their ritual, is to pour the waters of esoteric knowledge into the Masonic vessels, I hope nevertheless that it may appeal to a wider circle, and may perhaps be of use to some of those many Brn. [i.e., Brethren] in the masculine Craft who are seeking for a deeper interpretation of Masonic symbolism than is given in the majority of their Lodges....[139]

Because Co-Masonry followed the York Rite, Co-Masons believed that regular Masons could also benefit from the interpretations given in Co-Masonic books. Leadbeater's book includes a summary of the works of other, "regular" Masonic scholars, such as J.S.M. Ward and John Yarker (who conferred a higher-body Masonic degree, created for the women-folk of male members on H.P. Blavatsky). There is a twist though: Leadbeater claims to speak from personal experience about the ancient origins of Freemasonry, since he says he was initiated into the Egyptian Mysteries "some four thousand years before Christ"![140] This is something no regular Mason would have been so bold as to write in a book on the Craft, since reincarnation was not easily reconciled

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[137] *The Morning Star*, vol. 59, nos. 1-3 (January-December, 1993): 10.

[138] Charles Leadbeater, *The Hidden Life in Freemasonry* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1926), v-vi. Note Besant's attack on Western civilization's materialism which was used, as well, by Indians such as Vivekananda (himself a Mason—see next chapter) and Gandhi to deprecate the West's claim to moral superiority.

[139] Ibid. vi-viii.

[140] Ibid., 2.

with Masonic notions of the afterlife.[141] While reincarnation was not a belief which Theosophical Society members were required to hold, the movement's leaders espoused the idea and incorporated it into much of their thinking, no doubt making the idea difficult to criticize openly.

Since Co-Masonry was a heterodox type of Freemasonry,[142] regular Freemasonic Grand Lodges forbade its members to join such lodges. In the Minutes for March 1, 1907 of Lodge *Barton*, No. 475 (S.C.), located in Lonavla, midway up the rail line between Bombay and Poona, mention is made of a circular from the Grand Lodge of All-Scottish Freemasonry in India which "should be read in open Lodge, its contents brought to the knowledge of all members and embodied in the minutes,"[143] concerning Jamsetji Nowroji Unwalla, a Parsi Mason in Bombay. The letter from the Grand Secretary for India, Arthur W. Wise, includes a letter from the English Constitution's District Grand Lodge in Bombay declaring that Bro. Unwalla, of Lodge *Kathiawar*, No. 2787 (E.C.), was being suspended

> from membership in the Craft, and from all masonic privileges, for belonging to and refusing to sever his connection with a Spurious Body, and that the suspension will continue so long as he may continue his connection with Bodies purporting to acknowledge and work under the jurisdiction of a Body styling itself the "Supreme Council Universel Mixte Le'Droit Humain" of Paris and until he shall have made due submission and obtain grace in accordance with the Book of Constitutions.

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141 Recall, for example, Khurshedji Rustamji Cama: "Now, we know for a certainty that none are admitted into Freemasonry who believe in polytheism, in transmigration of souls, etc."—Kharshedji Rustomji Cama, "A Discourse on Zoroastrians and Freemasonry," (delivered at the Freemasons' Jamshedi Naoroz Festival, held at the Masonic Hall, Baboola Tank Road, on Wednesday, the 22nd of March 1876) (Bombay: Printed at the Times of India Steam Press, 1876), 1-2. Despite this declaration, reincarnation is not explicitly rejected as a point of Masonic doctrine, although most Masons of the time would have believed it incompatible with the Craft's teachings. Ironically, Cama himself would eventually join the Theosophical Society!—see K.J.B. Wadia, *Fifty Years of Theosophy in Bombay* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1931), 121

142 Co-Masons, though, reject the charge of being "irregular," choosing instead to style mainstream Masons as "masculine," and treat both Masculine Masonry and Co-Masonry as "regular." Co-Masonic literature betrays a regret that Masculine Masons do not accept Co-Masons as legitimate, and envisions a day when this might be so.

143 Minutes for 1 March 1907, in *Minute-book of Lodge "Barton," No. 475 (S.C.), Lonavla*, (MS). Courtesy of Mr. Phiroze M. Katrak, Secretary of Lodge *Barton*.

The letter from G.L.A.S.F.I. adds a note stating that since he was also a member of the Scottish Constitution's Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, the suspension of Unwalla "who is also a member of Lodge 'Rising Star of Western India', No. 342, S.C., Bombay, holds good and takes effect forthwith in the Scottish Constitution under the terms of the recent Conference between the Grand Lodges of Scotland, England, and Ireland." The notion of obtaining "grace" for his disobedience is remarkably religious in tone, and reinforces the argument that Freemasonry, although it vehemently denied being a religion in its own right, actually was one in all but name.

Unwalla was no mere member of an "irregular" lodge—he was a founding member of Lodge *Sangha*, No. 102, the first Co-Masonic lodge in Bombay, founded in January 1905.[144] By 1925, there were not more than four Co-Masonic lodges in the Bombay area, so the Order never posed the threat to "regular" Masons that it might have appeared to in 1907. In any case, being heterodox, Unwalla was fortunate in being only suspended from the Masonic Order, instead of being expelled (i.e., excommunicated) altogether. This suggests that regular Masonry held out the hope that Unwalla, like a prodigal son, would some day return to "true" Masonry and "obtain grace."

F. Cross-Fertilization

Despite its uncompromising attitude towards Co-Masonry, Freemasonry in India did not punish members who joined the Theosophical Society. And although a number of Masons appear to have had their doubts about Blavatsky (who, in the 1880s, had come under a cloud of scandal and been quietly "eased" out of India by Olcott and retired to England), there was clearly a cross-fertilization of ideas between the two movements. If the Theosophists drew much material from Freemasonry, they could also give it their own spin and and feed it back to Masonry. Raymond Knight, a justice of the Bombay High Court (mentioned above), one of the founding members of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*,

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[144] *The Morning Star*: 67-68. In an insolent jibe at regular Freemasonry, the article in *Morning Star* claims that "Masonry first came to Bombay when a meeting was held on 28 January 1905...."

states near the end of a speech to the lodge in 1909 that the ideas in his talk were taken from Blavatsky, to whom "I am indebted for all that I have laid before you this evening and for very much more. All that I have done is to check and verify her statements, and to add to them minor discoveries that accrued in the course of my examination. If now you seek a solution of the riddle of the universe, take my advice and go to her books and those of similar writers...."[145] However, Knight urges any prospective student first to adopt a vegetarian and non-alcoholic diet:

> If you muddle your wits with beef and beer, you place yourself in the position of an athlete who trains himself for a race by a course of opium smoking. Of all pursuits in the world, that of occult knowledge is the last to be undertaken lightly, and the one that demands the most sacrifices of the devotee. Of these, the abandonment of meat and alcohol is the first and by the far the easiest.... Ah! do you not see, you Masons, who bind yourselves with these fearful oaths, that knowledge is withheld from those who will not fit themselves to possess it?[146]

Although Masons did not make vegetarianism a prerequisite for advancement through the Masonic degrees, it was and has long been a subject for discussion in Theosophist circles.

As noted above, Blavatsky had earlier chided Masons for not exploring the full occultic potential of Masonry, arguing that Theosophy (what she called "esoteric" Masonry) provided the means to do that. At least some Masons seem to have taken her words to heart, as Knight demonstrates. And in a footnote to the published lecture, Knight says of Blavatsky: "She was herself a Freemason and the minute and profound knowledge of the science in her writings will astonish the Masonic inquirer."[147] Such a categorical statement must have unsettled at least some among his audience, for Blavatsky clearly could not have been a Mason in any official way. One wonders if Knight was also subtly endorsing the Co-Masonic principle. If so, Knight never went so far as to say it publicly.

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[145] Justice Raymond Knight, speech delivered to Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., December 1909, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 72. Knight defends Blavatsky's name, saying "I do not myself believe that she was guilty of the fraud and trickery imputed to her...."
[146] Ibid., 73.
[147] Ibid., 72.

It is important to note that Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* was not any run-of-the-mill lodge: its membership included the leading lights of the Bombay Presidency. Its twenty-three founder members included two I.C.S. officers (British), five Justices of the Bombay High Court (two Britons and three Indians); the Agha Khan; two Baronets (Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim, 2nd Bart., and Sir Sasoon J. David, 1st Bart.); Sir Dorabji J. Tata, son of Jamshedji Tata; a Raja (of Miraj); and a Nawab (of Sachin).[148] In 1913 and 1914, Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, would rule the lodge as its Master (four Governors of Bombay in all would be members of the lodge).[149] Hence, through Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, Blavatsky's reputation and various of her occult ideas were rehabilitated and preached to the richest and most powerful men in Bombay, both British and Indian. Nor would Justice Knight have been preaching to a completely unresponsive audience: Frank Beaman, the lodge's Master for its first five years and himself a Justice of the High court, a few years before the founding of the lodge had published a booklet, entitled "Theosophy," while he was still the Judicial Commissioner of Sind.[150] At least two other members of the lodge, the millionaire and mill-owner, Narottam M. Goculdas (a founder of the lodge), and the mill-owner and one-time mayor of Bombay, Dwarkadas Dharamsey, who joined a little later in 1908, were also members of the Theosophical Society.[151] Were the most important men in the Bombay Presidency (many of them Masons) moving towards some religious synthesis, and what did this mean for their activities in the outside world? In any case, it is clear that at least some Masonic lodges provided an arena for Theosophical ideas. Perhaps this was because many of these ideas were not especially new to Freemasons.

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148 See Appendix J, in ibid., 93.

149 See Appendix K, in ibid., 94.

150 An advertisement for "Theosophy" by "Mr. F.C.O. Beaman, I.C.S., Judicial Commissioner of Sind" appears at the end of *Twenty-five Years of The Blavatsky Lodge T.S., Bombay* (Bombay: Cherag Printing Press, 1905).

151 See K.J.B. Wadia, *Fifty Years of Theosophy in Bombay*, 121, 127. Also *Membership Registry of Lodge "Imperial Brotherhood," No. 1041, S.C.* (MRIB), entry #10 and #31.

While Freemasonry and Theosophy represent somewhat different strategies in the West's accommodation to Indian religion—since the latter tended to have a somewhat anti-Christian bias,[152] and Freemasonry was much more diverse in how it dealt with Christianity—yet, as chapter 5 will show, even Theosophy's reformulation of "true" Hinduism and its selective incorporation of certain Indian religious concepts and symbols demonstrate that both movements shared the Enlightenment belief that universal principles could be applied to the whole human race (recall also Greenlaw's view of Hinduism above). Both movements thus promulgated the Theosophical Enlightenment and represent two stages in its evolution. Elements of occultism, Rosicrucianism, Swedenborgism, and the like, flowed into Freemasonry and through it to the Theosophical Society. Moreover, the TS' fascination and connection with Masonry may be observed from its inception down to the present. The TS, then, was a *de-facto* "subsidiary," or extension, of Freemasonry. Therefore, the TS' influence on Indian history, whether on Indian nationalism or socio-religious reformism, ultimately must be treated as being inspired by Freemasonry, even if by the 20th century Freemasonry sometimes received recycled Masonic ideas from the Theosophical Society.

VII. CONCLUSION

In 1909, Col. R.H. Forman of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, summed up the unifying spirit of the modern age and Freemasonry's place in it:

> Before the invincible march of science, physical and mental, dogma is slowly, but surely, losing its grip; and the thinking men of all creeds are tending, more and more, towards uniformity in belief and conviction on those lines which Freemasonry has ever followed, and which bear the Grand Masters' mark[153] in the

[152] See, for example, Olcott in *The Theosophist*, vol. 1, no. 8 (May 1880): 213—"Dr. Wyld should not make me appear to call the Christian ethical code 'perfect.' If it were perfect, then it certainly would not lend itself to a double interpretation and so foster every vice and sin." Other Theosophical leaders often took a more moderate approach, though.

[153] Presumably, Forman is referring to the founders of the various great religions of the world, for he says earlier that the Chinese, Brahmins, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians derived their teachings from the Ancient

> original impress stamped upon them by the G.A. [Grand Architect, i.e., God] from the very dawn of creation and whose fulfilment first took shape when, in the sweep of evolution, man emerged from the darkness of the purely animal into the first glimmer of that spiritual light which testified to the divine within him.[154]

The Masonic scholar J.S.M. Ward[155] in 1921 poetically expressed the point to which Freemasonic religious formulations had been evolving for a century:

"The Preserver"

Whether they call Him the Madi,
Where the Crescent swings on high,
Or speak of the Christ returned to earth
From His throne in the azure sky.
Whether they hail Him by Buddha's name
Or Kalki, of Vishnu sprung,
They tell us a truth for all the same
And by every mystic sung.

For ever the Lord of Salvation
His task must fashion anew.
As the sun in his heat and glory
Sucks up the mist and dew,
And returning them to earth,
Renews the verdant plain,
So the Lord of Death and Birth
Returns to us again.[156]

If Forman spoke of Freemasonry as having a status superior to any of the existing great religions, Ward now gave to this ancient, universal religion the advent of a universal Savior expected by all peoples—one who, Krishna-like, is born from age to age.

In Chapters 2 and 3, we traced how the British Masonic community in India removed its racial restrictions—albeit largely by the command of authorities in Britain or wise Masonic rulers in India—so that Indians were allowed to be initiated. While race was ultimately an untenable basis for rejecting applicants in Freemasonry (at least in British Freemasonry), racial prejudice could often go hand-in-hand with religious chauvinism, and here British Masons did have more acceptable (to themselves, at least) justifications for keeping out most non-Christian Indians: Hindus were said to adhere to caste restrictions, to be polytheistic, etc., and Muslims were thought not to consider others as brothers. This was obviously self-serving, as it privileged Christian Masons—

Mysteries, which were "'transmitted to the West through the Pagan Philosophies and the Mithraic Rites; to the East by the Great Teachers of her ancient religions—Brahma, Buddha, Zoroaster—and by the Jews, as an outcome of their Egyptian captivity, through Moses and King Solomon...."—*Lodge "Imperial Brotherhood," No. 1041, S.C., Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1908-1958*, 50.

154 Ibid., 51. Lecture delivered Sept. 8, 1909.

155 As mentioned earlier, Ward was also heavily cited by Charles Leadbeater when the latter wrote his own book on Masonry, *Freemasonry and its Ancient Mystic Rites*, for Co-Masons.

156 J.S.M. Ward, *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*, 344.

that is, the British. But the place of Christianity within Masonry was seriously undermined by the desire of many Masons to see their movement as a primordial religion of sorts. The search for an original religion represents the "Roots" phenomenon writ large, and reflects a deep desire to find a familial connection between all the world's cultures and religions. It was stimulated by imperialism, which brought many peoples under one political roof. India, by itself, was extremely diverse, and this diversity confronted Britons with two options: maintain Christian and European chauvinism, or, by taking a latitudinarian and antiquarian approach, accept Christianity's parity with other religions. Many Freemasons, following an ideological trajectory which began in the early 18th century (perhaps even in the Renaissance), "de-centered" Christianity and, by the late 19th century and early 20th centuries, had come to see Freemasonry as a universal "religion" supple enough to serve the needs of empire, nationalism, and socio-religious reform. In the case of Empire, unlike the Theosophical Society, many Raj officials belonged to Freemasonry, which makes it all the more intriguing.

CHAPTER 5

"LODGE AND *SAMAJ*": FREEMASONRY AND HINDU RELIGIOUS REFORM

> The world is getting to believe, however slowly, in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The day of narrowness and bigotry, of class and caste, seems passing away. There is beyond dispute, a spirit abroad exciting to human thought, rousing to generous endeavour, stimulating to philanthropic deed, refining constitutions and laws, and seeking... by all right methods to broaden and elevate our common humanity.
>
> *Masonic Record of Western India* (1868)[1]

> In social reform and politics the Spirit of the Age means the breaking of the barriers between man and man—that caste and class are obstacles to progress, that all of us, even the lowest and meanest, are "born to share in the life of society,".... The test then of progress is "not more men, but more man." Let each of us develop the true man, by cultivating the spirit of truth, of love, of hard work, and quiet thinking.... The country is God's—it is part of His Universe; the people are His.
>
> Narayen Ganesh Chandavarkar (President, Prarthana Samaj)[2]

I. INTRODUCTION

The period of the Raj was one of intense reassessment of religion and society by Indians of various faiths—especially Hindus. Such reassessments were attempts to reconcile Indian tradition with Western modernity, and ultimately provided the justification for Indian nationalism in one form or another. Most scholars trace the stimulus for such reassessments (and the reform movements which resulted therefrom) both to Christian missionary critiques of Indian religions and, later, to modern science and liberal social philosophies, such as Utilitarianism, taught in the institutions of Western education.[3] But there was also a third "vehicle" by which Western social and religious ideas flowed into Hindu reformism—namely, Freemasonry.

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[1] *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 5, no. 8 (November 1868): 300.

[2] Narayen Ganesh Chandavarkar, "A Wrestling Soul, I," in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, ed. L.V. Kaikini (Bombay: Manoranjak Grantha Prasarak Mandali, 1911), 593-94.

[3] See John Nicol Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publishers and Booksellers, 1967; first Indian edition. Originally published New York: Macmillan, 1915), 433-34: "While the shaping forces at work in the movements have been many, it is quite clear that *Christianity has ruled the development throughout.* Christianity has been, as it were, a great searchlight flung across the expanse of religions; and in its blaze all the course, unclean and superstitious elements of

Indeed, in 1887, Sir Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar (1855-1923)—High Court of Bombay judge, president of the reformist Prarthana Samaj in Bombay from 1896, vice-chancellor of the University of Bombay, general-secretary of the Indian Social Conference, one-time president of the Indian National Congress, first president of the reformed Bombay Legislative Council,[4] *and* Freemason—spoke of a Masonic consciousness among Hindu reformers in the Bombay area around 1840: "If what I have been told by more than one Indian gentleman be true, it would seem that so long ago as 1840 a society, based somewhat on the principles of free-masonry, was started by the first generation of educated Hindoos, having for its object the abolition of caste."[5] This would have been thirty-odd years before Hindus were permitted into Freemasonry in Bombay, and it suggests that an awareness of and fascination with Freemasonry was pervasive among Bombay's western-educated Indians by the mid-19th century.

One cannot deny, of course, that Chandavarkar might have been looking at the precursor movements of the Prarthana Samaj through the prism of his long experience as a Freemason. And while he obviously was not referring to the existence of Hindu Freemasons in the 1840s, the circumstantial evidence is weighty that the Hindu reformers around Bombay knew of Freemasonry, through articles in the press, public spectacles, and Parsi friends who were (or would become) Freemasons and who were themselves engaged in socio-religious reform within their own community. Thus, whether

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the old faiths stood out, quite early, in painful vividness.... But the same light which exposed all the grossness gradually enabled men to distinguished the nobler and more spiritual elements of the religions. Consequently the Hindu, the Jain, the Parsee and the Muhammadan set these in the foreground, crushed out the worst as far as possible, and sought to build up fresh organizations which should be able to bear the searching glare continually flung on them by the great Intruder from the West.... In every case the attempt is made to come up to Christian requirements.... Christianity is the norm.... Christianity has made men feel that the only possible religion is *monotheism*. The Brahma, Prarthana and Arya Samajes declare themselves as truly monotheistic as Christianity. Parsees and Muhammadans make the same claim." It is ironic that Farquhar includes Muslims in this list, since they usually deem *Christianity* to have degenerated into polytheism!

[4] Ganesh L. Chandavarkar, *A Wrestling Soul: Story and Life of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1955), xi.

[5] Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Hindu Social Reform: the Forces at Work" (orig. in *Times of India*, 8 Dec. 1887), *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 11.

Chandavarkar was implying a direct influence of Freemasonry on Hindu reformism, or simply an ideological similarity—a case of being "fellow travelers"—it is clear that by the latter half of the 19th century Freemasonry had become a by-word in Western India for a politically liberal and a socially and religiously "progressive" outlook. Freemasonry represented at once both an ideology and a complex organizational structure to propagate and apply that ideology.

Certainly, religiously orthodox Indians were under no illusions as to what the agenda of Freemasonry was or the threat it posed to their traditions, as demonstrated by the fact that they labeled Masonic lodges either as *bhoot-khanas* (demon houses), *jadughars* (houses of sorcery), or *shaitan-khanas* (devil houses).[6] Such epithets were an attempt to connect Freemasonry with evil and black magic in order to frighten fellow Indians away from investigating the movement. (The secrecy of Masonic rituals no doubt played into the hands of such anti-Masonic propagandists!)

Among Indians, Freemasonry was promoted mainly among the western-educated (initially Parsis). Masonic leaders like James Burnes and Henry Fawcett in the 1840s envisioned Freemasonry accomplishing social reform through the "light" of truth and the dissolution of "superstition," and hoped to attract western-educated Indians working in government jobs. As an aside, the role of the Bombay government in spreading western education was first enunciated formally by Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone, in his Minute on Education dated March 10, 1825. Elphinstone's aim was not merely or primarily to fill government offices with inexpensive Indian clerks, but to "diffuse knowledge among all orders of the people of the country, and to concur with other causes

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[6] "The term [i.e., *jadoogur*] commonly applied by natives to a Freemasons' Lodge, when there is one, at an English station. On the Bombay side it is also called *Shaitan khana* (see Burton's *Sind Revisited*), a name consonant to the ideas of an Italian priest who intimated to one of the present writers that he had heard the raising of the devil was practised at Masonic meetings, and asked his friend's opinion as to the fact. In S. India, the Lodge is called *Talai-vetta-Kovil*, 'Cut-head Temple,' because part of the rite of initiation is supposed to consist in the candidate's head being cut off and put on again"—Col. Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (1886; Calcutta: Rupa and Co, 1990), 445.

in raising them to level with the European nations."[7] No wonder, then, that the foremost educational institution in mid-19th century Western India bore his name.[8] For Elphinstone, western education promised sweeping social reform in India, leading to a "time of separation...; and it is for our interest to have an early separation from a civilised people, rather than a violent rupture with a barbarous nation."[9] While Elphinstone was probably not a Mason himself—although he expressed an interest in becoming one[10]—his nephew, one-time Governor of Madras and, in the 1850s, Governor of Bombay,[11] was a prominent Mason, especially in South India, where he had been Provincial Grand Master for the Madras Presidency.[12]

In this chapter, I will argue that Freemasonry—which had been intimately involved in 17th and 18th-century Europe with social reformism and religious reinterpretation (sometimes even skepticism) in light of the new science and antiquarianism—was well-positioned to provide both an ideology and an organizational structure for Western-educated Indians to copy, in order to reform their own religious communities. Because of the communication between Hindu religious reformers in Bombay and Bengal, I shall also extend the geographic reach of this chapter to eastern India in order to demonstrate the various ways Masonry might have influenced Hindu reformism in the Bombay Presidency.

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[7] Mountstuart Elphinstone, in Ganesh L. Chandavarkar, *A Wrestling Soul*, 19.

[8] The Elphinstone Institution, opened in 1834, comprised three objects: "(1) a college department, to which holders of scholarships, twenty in number [at first], were alone admitted, and where the subjects taught included English composition, logic, political economy, higher mathematics, and physical science; (2) a middle school, in which both English and the vernacular were taught; and (3) a number of vernacular schools. Professorships of botany and chemistry were added in 1846. But it was not until 1873 that the college received its full staff," of seven professors.—J.S. Cotton, *Mountstuart Elphinstone* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 196-97.

[9] Mountstuart Elphinstone, letter to Sir James Mackintosh, June 1819, in J.S. Cotton, *Mountstuart Elphinstone*, 186.

[10] See Chapter 2, conclusion.

[11] J.S. Cotton, *Mountstuart Elphinstone*, 186.

[12] Elphinstone's nephew (also Lord Elphinstone), ex-Governor of Madras, was made an honorary member of Lodge *Rising Star* in 1845—see D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 49.

II. FREEMASONRY AND SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM IN BOMBAY

A. Introduction:

In 1893, Narayen G. Chandavarkar, quoting Dr. T.K. Cheyne, wrote: "religious reform is a necessary condition of social progress."[13] For Chandavarkar, social reform was part of a national, and even nationalist, mission, one which sought to ground religious reform, the inculcation of "holiness," and modernity in the religious teachings of pre-modern Indian religion: "Equally true is it to say of our people that while their social progress can but come through their religious reform, their religious reform must come from their own 'essential' past. Hence the necessity of teaching them what their own prophets and saints have said and preached and of trying to impress them with the ideals of holiness."[14]

In defining "socio-religious" reformism, Kenneth Jones treats the element "socio" as "an attempt to reorder society in the areas of social behavior, custom, structure or control.... The term 'religious' refers to the type of authority used to legitimize a given ideology and its accompanying programme."[15] Since the justification for laws, tradition, and ritual derives from religion in most societies, it follows that those who wish to reform these need either to undermine religion or appeal to it. The latter requires reinterpreting religion. The stimulus for such reinterpretation may be internal, as in the case of the Lingayats of South India, or it may be external, as in the case of the Brahmo Samaj, which attempted to defend Hinduism against a Western Christian critique and in the process reinvented Hinduism: "meaning became all, and interpretation opened the way to legitimize change through the authority of ancient scripture."[16]

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[13] Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Hindu Protestantism: Reform not Revival" (1893), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 39.

[14] Ibid., 40.

[15] Kenneth Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (New Cambridge History of India, III, 1) (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-2.

[16] Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 31.

The reinterpretation of religion necessarily involved a return to the authoritative sources of religion—whether written or oral—in order to show that the reformers had a command over those sources and thus spoke with more authority than those who upheld the status quo. In the case of Christian reformers, that meant a return to the Bible.[17] With Hinduism, however, where religious texts are many and different sects often had their own authoritative works, such texts could be, and were, used to argue conflicting positions regarding reform. There was, as well, the added burden of weighting the various sources—the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, etc.—in terms of authority. And different reformist groups did not always agree on a common scheme for doing this or for deciding which texts were even legitimate: the Brahmo Samaj gave prominence to the *Upanishads*; the Arya Samaj accepted only the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas*, discounting other texts (e.g., *Brahmanas*, *Upanishads*, and especially the *Puranas*) which did not conform to that organization's understanding of the *mantras*.[18]

B. Beginnings of Reform in Bombay:

Organized socio-religious reform movements of what Kenneth Jones calls the "acculturative" kind (i.e., created in the colonial milieu by products of the cultural interaction between India and the West)[19] arose in Bombay first in the 1840s. The early 1840s were a time of intense ideological turmoil: Christian missionaries had begun a campaign of attacking Hinduism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism. The attacks were aimed primarily at the students of the English-medium institutions, who, getting no help from their priests, were left to their own devices to defend their religions. The general ferment

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[17] Christian reformers, too, have a similar problem concerning the various books of the Bible. Thus, a tradition of "Biblical criticism" arose in 18th-century Europe, attempting to analyze the sources and contexts of the books of the Bible. It represents an expansion of an exegetical tradition which also became associated with skepticism, although originally it was the domain of believers, such as the "Christian Humanists" like Erasmus. This textual criticism could be, and was, applied by both antiquarians and missionaries to the texts of other religions, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, and was in turn adopted by Hindu and Buddhist reformers for their own purposes.

[18] See Dayananda Saraswati, *The Light of Truth* (English translation of *Satyartha Prakasha*), Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya, trans. (Allahabad: Kala Press, 1908[?]), 849.

[19] See Kenneth Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 3.

led to an outburst of Gujarati journalism by both Parsis and Hindus in defense of the essentials of their religion, even if not all their external practices.[20] The missionaries no doubt saw western-educated Indians as intellectually predisposed to Protestant Christianity by virtue of their education, and as excellent vehicles for the transmission of Western Christianity to the Indian masses.

At the same time, certain British Freemasons began thinking about recruiting the emerging class of western-educated Indians into the "Craft." In December 1843, the first Masonic lodge—*Rising Star of Western India*—was founded in Bombay for the express purpose of screening "Natives" for acceptance into Freemasonry. The acceptable "Natives" at that time included Parsis and Muslims, but not Hindus, who were kept out of Freemasonry at the all-India level until 1872.[21] The principle objections to the admission of Hindus centered on the charges against them of polytheism and caste-consciousness, which were seen to contradict the fundamental Masonic principles of the oneness of God and universal brotherhood.

C. Parsi and Muslim Reform:

Although this chapter is mainly concerned with Hindu socio-religious reform and its connections with Freemasonry, there was also a strong connection between the Craft and Parsi and Muslim reform in Bombay. In 1851, Naoroji Furdoonji, the future "Tribune of the People" of Bombay, along with a small circle of educated Parsis—including Dadabhai Naoroji[22]—founded the well-known "Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha" (Parsis' Reform Society)[23] The funds for the organization Cursetjee Nusserwanji Cama. Furdoonji was president until his death in 1885. The secretary of the R.M.S. was

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[20] See James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism: Group affiliations and the politics of public associations in nineteenth century Western India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan , 1974), 33-34.

[21] Although, in the South Hindus were being admitted in small numbers. However this policy did not affect the Bengal or Bombay Presidencies.

[22] See Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 227.

[23] Kenneth Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*. The New Cambridge History of India, III.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 147. Furdoonji was president until his death in 1885.

Sorabji Shapurji Bengali, an "ardent writer, whose main subjects were the glories of ancient Iran and popularizing the new western knowledge. In 1850, Bengali had begun publishing a monthly journal, *Jagat Mitra* (Friend of the World), to further the acceptance of his ideas among literate Parsis."[24] All four men would later be initiated into Freemasonry in Lodge *Rising Star*: Dadabhai Naoroji, in 1854;[25] C.N. Cama, in 1857;[26] Bengali, in 1862;[27] and Furdoonji, in 1864.[28] Typical of the Masonic Enlightenment and antiquarian projects, the purpose of the Sabha was to revive "'the social condition of the Parsees and... [to restore] the Zoroastrian religion to its pristine purity.'"[29]

Among Bombay's Muslims, the most prominent reformist organization was the "Anjuman-i-Islam" was founded in 1876 by the Mason Badruddin Tyabji "to remedy the poor educational facilities available for Muslims,"[30] and it was supported as well by the labors of Abdulla M. Dharamsi and Kazi Kabiruddin (b. 1872)—both Masons;[31]

D. Hindus:

Prior to 1872 most arguments in favor of reruiting Indians—especially Hindus—into Freemasonry mention its role in the removal of "superstition" and the spread of "civilization." For example, at a District Grand Lodge of Bombay meeting, on July 2, 1870, James Gibbs, the District Grand Master of Bombay, spoke of the progress Freemasonry had made in India and envisioned that it "would constitute a great help

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[24] Kenneth Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 147. Recall the Mason Kipling's title for Kim—"friend to all the world."

[25] See *Membership List of Lodge Rising Star* (MLRS), entry no. 148.

[26] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342 S.C.* (Bombay: British India Press, 1912), 116.

[27] Ibid., 131.

[28] Ibid., 147.

[29] Quoted in Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 227.

[30] See Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 229.

[31] See C.B. Burrows, *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 2nd ed., 83, 160. Kabiruddin took over as Honorary Secretary for the Anjuman when Dharamsi died in 1897 and also became a member of its school committee. It is not clear when Kabiruddin was initiated (probably not before 1893, when he would have turned twenty-one), but he was Master of Lodge *Islam* in 1902-03—see list of Past Masters in Lodge *Islam's* "Programme of the 112th Regular Installation Meeting" for 1988 (Islam P.R.I.M.). Courtesy of Mr. Mufazzal S. Federal.

towards the spread of European civilization and the removal of caste prejudices."[32] And, in a letter to fellow Parsi, J. N. Dady (Master of the Bombay-based Lodge *Cyrus*) D.R. Chichgur, Master of Lodge *Rising Star*, wrote in December 1872, on the eve of *Cyrus'* plan to initiate some Hindus, that if their entry into Freemasonry could be effected "without doing any violence to the spirit of our Order, all the caste prejudices which grind down the Hindus would melt away under the benign influence of Freemasonry and *create a social revolution in India*."[33] These statements offer ample proof that contemporary Masons saw their movement as a vehicle for social and religious reform—even revolution—along Western lines, especially in removing what Max Weber terms "irrational" (and hence pre-modern) ascriptive social barriers such as caste. Although few today associate contemporary Freemasonry with socio-religious revolution, such was the vision of leading Masons in 19th-century Bombay, even as far back as the early 1840s, when the decision was being made to let in Parsis and Muslims.

Beginning in 1844 (the same year in which Lodge *Rising Star* began operating), we see various attempts by Hindus—both Gujarati and Maharashtrian—in the Bombay Presidency to reform their communities' religious practices, and to strive for religious universalism. Interestingly, almost all the Hindu socio-religious reform movements in 19th-century Bombay seem to have borrowed Masonic ideological features, and were led by Masons, or Masons-to-be, or had important Masonic membership at various points in their institutional lives.

III. MANAVA DHARMA SABHA

The first movement of socio-religious reformism among Hindus in the Bombay area (Surat, to be precise) was the Manava Dharma Sabha (Society for the Religion of Man), founded by the Maratha school teacher from Bombay, Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhad

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32 *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 6 (Sept., 1870): 235.

33 D.R. Chichgur, letter to J.N. Dady, 18 December 1872: Appendix O in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 409 (my italics).

(1814-82) and Mehtaji Durgaram Manchharam (1809-76), a Nagar Brahmin who had been educated in Bombay, and a few other friends.[34] It lasted from June 1844 to about 1846. The immediate reason for the founding of the Sabha was the uproar caused in the Parsi and Hindu communities of Western India over the conversion of three Parsis in 1839 to Christianity, and then of a Brahmin, Narayana Sheshadri, in 1843.[35] That year, "the more wealthy Hindus commenced printing... a series of their popular religious books in monthly numbers. None of these books had ever been printed before, having been in manuscript form, both inaccessible and costly."[36] In 1844, a religious war of words ensued in the press between Christian missionary and Hindu papers. One result of this struggle was that it exposed a rift among Hindus between the orthodox and their opponents, the reformers dissatisfied with contemporary Hindu practices, especially the caste system. Mehtaji Manchharam had himself acquired a lithographic press in 1842, two years before he helped found the Manava Dharma Sabha, in order to disseminate his reformist ideas in Gujarati in the Surat area.[37]

A. Ideology:

Co-founder Dadoba Pandurang had flirted with becoming a Christian, but finally decided against it. A year before the formation of the Sabha, Dadoba had written a book, *Dharmavivechan* (Investigation of Religion), which seems to have been the inspiration for the tenets of the Manava Dharma Sabha (see table).

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[34] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 138. The other names mentioned by Jones are Dinmani Shankar, Dalpatram Bhagubai, and Damodar Das.

[35] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 75.

[36] Vijaya V. Gupchup, *Bombay: Social Change, 1813-1857* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1993), 130.

[37] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 138.

<u>*Dharmavivechan's* principles</u>:	<u>Tenets of the Manava Dharma Sabha</u>:
1. God is one, and He alone should be worshipped.	1. There is only one God.
2. The real religion is devotion to God based on love and good moral conduct.	2. The whole human race is one caste.
3. The spiritual religion of mankind is one.	3. The religion of mankind is one. It is only a false sense of pride which makes people think that they belong to different religions.
4. Every individual must have freedom of thought.	4. Merit and not birth should determine man's status.
5. All our daily work should be consistent with reason and discrimination.	5. One should always act in a rational manner.
6. The whole of mankind is one caste.	6. One should devote himself to God for his favour.
7. The right kind of knowledge should be imparted to all.	7. All should be educated to follow the right path.[38]

The practical goals of the Manava Dharma Sabha were to

> select what is true out of all the different religions now prevailing on earth, such as the Christian, the Mussulman, the Hindoo etc., to expose the hypocritical arts...[which various religious leaders]...have put in practice, and the falsehoods they have inserted into their respective Shasters for the sake of securing themselves a superiority over their fellowmen; and lastly to dispel ignorance under the influence of which men have been led to regard the stories told them by these deceivers as the declarations of God Himself.[39]

The movement also offered a Rs. 27 challenge to magicians and casters of spells to demonstrate their skills. The Sabha criticized the caste system, but did not act to challenge it,[40] although in order to "demonstrate their sincerity in the brotherhood of men they are [*sic*, ate?] slices of bread brought from outside."[41]

When Dadoba left Surat in 1846 to take charge of the Normal School in Bombay, the movement effectively came to an end, although it probably lingered on in some

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[38] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India: the Paramahansa Sabha," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, vols. 49-51 (1974-75-76, new series): 144.

[39] From an article in the journal *Prabhakar*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Jan. 5, 1845); in J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India: the Paramahansa Sabha," *JASB*, vols. 49-51 (1974-76, n.s.): 145. See also Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 138.

[40] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 139.

[41] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 146.

capacity until 1852, when Mehtaji Durgaram Manchharam left Surat to take a post at Rajkot.[42]

B. Influences:

The principles of the Sabha (see table above), while they could have been inspired by Christianity,[43] better reflect Freemasonic ideology, especially the Sabha's openness to truth in other religions, and the call to "reason" and universalism. Like Ram Mohan Roy, Dadoba, a Sanskrit scholar with Christian leanings, "was moving towards a Universal Religion to be based on the best traditions of Hindu theism."[44] Freemasonry, especially after the reforms in the ritual practice carried out by the Duke of Sussex in the early 19th century, already had constructed for itself a "Christian" ethical system which did not require a belief in Christ (see below). Hence, it was a perfect model of emulation for people like Dadoba (and many others among the western-educated elites of India) who were torn between their identity as Hindus, their attraction to Christianity, and a fascination with rationalism and humanism. "In this situation, the old order could no longer have any hold on the minds of these middle-class intellectuals. Though conversion to Christianity did not appeal to them, Hinduism in its existing form was equally intolerable."[45] Later in his life, Dadoba Pandurang displayed a deep interest in Emanuel Swedenborg (himself a Mason), and even wrote a 94-page book entitled *A Hindu gentleman's reflections respecting the works of Swedenborg and their doctrines of the new Jerusalem church.*[46] The book reflected not only a deep understanding of Indian philosophy and religion, but also showed Dadoba's "acquaintance with Sufism and

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[42] Ibid.

[43] As Vijaya Gupchup maintains—see Gupchup, *Bombay: Social Change, 1813-1857*, 134.

[44] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 159.

[45] Ibid.: 138.

[46] Dadoba Pandurang, *A Hindu gentleman's reflections respecting the works of Swedenborg and their doctrines of the new Jerusalem church. Being a letter ... to the president and members of the Swedenborg Society, London* (London, J. Speirs, 1879). It was published first in Bombay in 1878.

Christian Monasticism, and that he had read books on mesmerism, clairvoyance and spirituality."[47]

The notion of moral truth existing in all religions that we see in Dadoba's speculations and in the ideology of the Manava Dharma Sabha, as well as the antagonism toward priestcraft and superstition, the desire to remove caste distinctions, and the attempt to dispel the ignorance of the laity—all were being emphasized by Masons in contemporary speeches and letters which addressed the opening up of Freemasonry to Indians and the social impact this was expected to have.[48]

The question is, given contemporary Masonic declarations along similar reformist lines *within* the lodge, where would reformist Hindus have been learning about Freemasonry *outside* the lodge at this time? Many of these same Hindus attended, along with Parsis, western-style educational institutions such as the Elphinstone Institution (founded 1834). The fact that Freemasonry was specifically trying to recruit western-educated Parsis at this time[49] suggests that Parsi recruits for Masonry were discussing the Craft with their Hindu friends. Also, both groups had common concerns and anxieties regarding Christian missionary activity and no doubt were talking about religion with each other. Certainly, they would have been reading the Gujarati articles being produced by each other in response to missionary attacks.

Aside from Parsi friends and Gujarati *apologias* in the press, though, any English-speaking Hindu could have read about Masonry in the newspapers. The earliest evidence for any discussion of Freemasonry in Bombay vernacular press is from about 1823, when Furdoonjee Murzban, the editor of the *Bombay Samachar* (founded 1822), the first

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[47] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 141.

[48] Recall, for example, Provincial Grand Master, James Burnes' and Henry Fawcett's speeches at Lodge *St. Andrew's in the East* (Poona) in July 1844. Fawcett says: "...instruction will flow from it [Freemasonry], producing as it ever does an insatiable thirst for further knowledge, before which superstition must shroud its blasted head, and ignorance and bigotry seek together their kindred shades of darkness.... [I]t is within our power... to prove... that the Craft are indeed a band of brothers, amongst whom there is no place for jealousy, no room for discord."—Lodge *St. Andrew's in the East* minute-book: minutes for July 30, 1844 meeting. (Courtesy of Mr. Larry Grant)

[49] See Burnes' speech in Minutes of Lodge *St. Andrew's in the East* (Poona), July 30, 1844.

vernacular paper established in Bombay, took an interest in the Craft and ran columns on it, and even showed an interest in becoming a Mason.[50] Beginning in 1840, the non-Masonic English press in both Calcutta and Bombay began to discuss seriously the admissibility of Indians into Freemasonry. In these exchanges, the principles of Freemasonry were clearly laid out.[51] Beginning in January 1840, the editor of the English-language *Bombay Gazette* began discussing Freemasonry in a positive light in his paper, attempting to show the universality of the movement, and one article even spoke of various aristocratic Indians (Muslims) and Persians who had become Masons.[52]

Such discussions in the press were followed, on January 3, 1843, by a spectacular Masonic cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital in Bombay (a year and a half before the founding of the Manava Dharma Sabha), carried out by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India. This was witnessed by "an immense assemblage of every class and denomination" in the city.[53] At that ceremony, the Provincial Grand Master, James Burnes, announced that "God hath made mankind one mighty brotherhood. Himself their Master, and the World their Lodge."[54] He also stressed the antiquity of Freemasonry and its role in spreading civilization and enlightenment. A letter to an English Masonic journal claimed that the event "made a considerable impression upon the wondering natives."[55] That the Sabha's founding on June 22, 1844 occured so soon after the promotion of Freemasonry among Indians may very well be more than mere coincidence. While Freemasonry was not yet accepting

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[50] Kharshedji Rustomji Cama, "A Discourse on Zoroastrians and Freemasonry." Lecture delivered at the Freemasons' Jamshedi Naoroz Festival. Masonic Hall, Baboola Tank Road, Bombay, 22 March 1876 (Bombay: Printed at the *Times of India* Steam Press, 1876), 2.

[51] See, for example, *Bombay Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1840.

[52] *Bombay Gazette*, January 27, 1840. Perhaps not coincidentally, one of the proprietors of this journal in the 1830s, and perhaps later, too, was Manockjee Cursetjee, the first Bombay Indian to be initiated into Masonry (in 1843), and a co-founder of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*—see Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 9.

[53] See *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, Jan. 4, 1843.

[54] Ibid.

[55] *Freemasons' Quarterly Review* (n.s.)(September 1845): 361-64. Also quoted in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 36.

Hindus, western-educated Hindus would have found it hard to ignore Freemasonry, which was permeating the atmosphere of 1840s Bombay, and which seemed to conform to and endorse the new tenor of the times, *and* whose antiquarianism provided a Western-oiginated defense against conversion to Christianity. The western-educated Parsis and Hindus who came to prominence as a distinct group—known as "Young Bombay"—in the 1840s, was ripe for the message of Freemasonry and were no doubt intrigued by it.

After the uproar over the Hindu conversion in 1843, and the awakening to issues of religious reform which resulted from the Christian missionary critique surrounding this incident, the next stage in reformism came, according to N.G. Chandavarkar, "when the first batch of Elphinstonians [i.e., students of the Elphinstone Institution in Bombay], guided by their English Professors—scholars like Reid and Patton—opened classes for the education of girls, and started the Students' Literary and Scientific Society for the promotion of Female Education."[56] Richard Reid eventually was initiated into Lodge *Perseverance* in 1851. He is listed as being a tutor in that lodge's membership registry, but in 1852, when he joined Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, he is listed more descriptively as a "Professor at the Elphinstone Institution," an "LL.D." and a "Barrister-at-Law."[57] Although Reid initiated this reformist program prior to becoming a Mason, one could argue that his progressive ideals eventually impelled him towards Masonry, which in turn would have bolstered those ideals. In the lodge, he no doubt would have met some of his erstwhile students as a "brother."

C. Membership:

The issue of how many people were involved in the Manava Dharma Sabha is vague in the various sources. All that is really certain is that it was composed mostly of a small group of western-educated Gujaratis who were critical of contemporary society,[58]

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[56] N.G. Chandavarkar, speech to the Bombay Provincial Social Conference, 1901, in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 94.

[57] *Membership List of Lodge "Rising Star of Western India," No. 342, S.C., Bombay* (MLRS), entry #95. Courtesy of Mr. Pervez Mistry, Secretary.

[58] See Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 138.

although Dadoba himself was a Maharashtrian. At least one was a Brahmin. It appears to have been a very small circle of reformers. Most likely no members belonged to the lowest castes, simply because this was an organization of western-educated men, and the lowest castes had little access to such an education.

IV. PARAMAHANSA MANDALI

Freemasonry seems to have contributed more directly to the formation, sometime between 1846 and 1849, of a secret society, the Paramahansa Mandali (or Sabha), founded by Dadoba Pandurang. According to Jim Masselos, the Paramahansa Mandali "had evolved out of the enthusiasm with which twelve Brahman pupils of the Normal School in Bombay had accepted the teaching regarding caste abolition advocated by the Marathi Sanskrit scholar, Dadoba Pandurang, after he assumed charge of the school in 1846. Dadoba's enthusiasm was contagious, his teaching spread to other schools and colleges"[59] and this led before long to the founding of the Mandali. For Narayen Chandavarkar, a leader of the Prarthana Samaj, the Mandali's' institutional successor, the primary object of the new society

> was slowly but surely to destroy caste. The young men felt that India had suffered on account of the divisions of caste which prevailed amongst the people, and that no reform could succeed, and that India could not rise in the scale of nations unless caste was done away with.....They started some-what on *masonic principles*, the whole thing was to be kept secret, caste was to be denounced, caste was to be got rid of....[60]

By 1849, the Mandali had a formal constitution, and its first President was Ram Balkrishna Jaykar. For a reason which is unclear to scholars, Dadoba did not officially join the Mandali, choosing instead to support the movement from the sidelines. However, his brother, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang (1823-98), was a member, as were other

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[59] James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 81 (my italics).

[60] Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Darkness or Dawn?" (1909), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 401-02 (my italics).

important reformers, such as N.M. Paramanand and Bala Mangesh Wagle.[61] Although Atmaram Pandurang was not a Freemason at this time, he would become one in 1875.[62] And Bala Mangesh Wagle was made a Freemason in December 1872 by Lodge *Cyrus*, with the first batch of Hindus initiated in Bombay.[63] This supports the view that Hindu socio-religious reform movements in Bombay were, at the very least, ideological "fellow-travelers" with Freemasonry and could go so far as to share membership with it (when the restriction on initiating Hindus was lifted). The fact that the first Hindu Freemasons in Bombay were initiated in a Parsi lodge also suggests links between Parsi and Hindu reformers. Dadoba's standing aloof from formal membership in the Mandali might reflect a tendency which could explain why he chose not to become a Freemason along with his brother. Ideologically speaking, though, he reflected a Masonic worldview.

A. Ideology:

The Paramahansa Mandali had no fixed meeting place, and meetings were held initially in the Girgaum part of downtown Bombay, where the Normal Scholars lived, and later either at the home of the President, Ram Balkrishna Jaykar, or that of Atmaram Pandurang.[64] Meetings included singing certain *bhakti* hymns from the Marathi *Ratnamala* (the object of devotion in the hymns was understood in theistic terms, however), and sometimes prayers composed by Dadoba were read. Also, members read papers and "discussed a variety of social and religious topics."[65] Besides trying to abolish caste, members sought to bring about "'the introduction of widow re-marriage, and the renunciation of idolatry.'"[66] The attraction of *bhakti* Hinduism was no doubt due to its universalism and anti-legalism, in contrast to the corporatistic restrictions on contact with other groups as commonly mandated by "orthodox" Brahminical and Shastraic Hinduism.

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[61] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 75.
[62] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 213, and MLRS, entry #281.
[63] *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 10 (January 1873): 364.
[64] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 148
[65] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 140.
[66] James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 81.

If Hindu reformers were to modernize their society by relying on elements of Hinduism, *bhakti* was the indigenous tradition of choice, both because of its message of egalitarianism and its emotional appeal.

Such a movement, targeting for destruction as it did the caste system, was attempting to restructure society by dissolving the barriers of social corporatism typically associated by sociologists with medieval society, in favor of a notion of the individual whose primary loyalty is directed toward the state or monarch, not to intermediate bodies or polities. This is the paradigm of the modern state and society—a paradigm which Freemasonry, with its notions of fraternity and universalism, had done much to foster in the lodges of 18th-century Western Europe, where "enlightened political culture" sought to create in each country from the 1790s on "a universal national culture. In that endeavor are present elements of the utopianism that masonic discourse could so readily express."[67]

B. Influences:

Chandavarkar's words above suggest that Freemasonry was beginning to do the same thing among those groups in the Bombay Presidency most exposed to the West for, in the minds of these reformers, Masonic ideas of fraternity seemed to have become linked with ridding India of the caste system. To be sure, Protestant missionaries espoused the same goals, but their success in converting Indians of any religious community in Bombay had been dismal.

By contrast, by the late 1840s Lodge *Rising Star* was already well-established and had prominent members from among the Western-educated Parsis and Muslims of Bombay (including the first Indian member of the Royal Society in London)—men whom the Pandurang brothers and their friends must certainly have known, since the circle of

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[67] Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 224.

western-educated Indians in Bombay was still small at this time.[68] (For example, Atmaram Pandurang, an Elphinstonian and later one of the individuals comprising the first batch of graduates of the Grant Medical College in 1851, had as his fellow medical graduates a mere two Hindus, two Parsis, and three Indo-Portuguese.[69]) Thus, to the previously-mentioned sources of information about Freemasonry would now have been added the example of a working model of Indian Masons of different religions operating together as "brothers." This was the only movement of this kind in Bombay at the time, and the notion that Zoroastrians and Muslims, and also "natives" and Britons could call each other "brother" must surely have been an exhilarating one, even to the Hindu segment of "Young Bombay" as yet excluded from the "Craft."

As an aside, it is interesting to note that of the eighteen Indians who would become prominent in the larger society of Bombay whom Christine Dobbin identifies as graduating from, or teaching at, the Elphinstone Institution's College Department in its early years (up to the late 1850s), seven of them—approximately forty percent—would ultimately become Masons: Naoroji Furdunji (1817-85), Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), Atmaram Pandurang (1823-98), Sorabji Shapurji Bengali (1831-93), Kharshedji Rustamji Cama (1831-1909), Bala Mangesh Wagle, and Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906). And the first six would all become members in common of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*.[70] Dadabhai Naoroji (as well as K.R. Cama) was initated in 1854 while he was an Acting Professor at Elphinstone. As mentioned above, Prof. Richard Reid had already been initiated as a Mason a little earlier, and also became a *Rising Star* member in 1852. One wonders if Reid was the first link in a chain of "Elphinstonian" Masons. There seems to have been, besides the old school tie, then, a Masonic tie which developed mostly after

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[68] From 1840 to 1849, the College Department of the Ephinstone Institution had an average of 44 students per year—see Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, 36.

[69] See Vijaya Gupchup, *Bombay: Social Change, 1813-1857*, 78. It is difficult to ascertain whether any of these eventually became Masons, because they would have been posted by the government to different parts of the Presidency.

[70] See MLRS, entry nos. 213, 148, 281, 195, 154, 274, respectively. Also, Badruddin Tyabji's brother, Cumruddin, was initiated in Lodge *Rising Star*—see D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 131.

graduation, and this discovery points to Lodge *Rising Star*—the first, and for long the most prestigious, "native" lodge—as a post-graduate ritual and fraternal arena for reform-minded and progressive Elphinstonians, an arena where their idealistic vision of a new society could be reinforced. (This Masonic tie would center around Dadabhai Naoroji in later years and take on a more politically activist bent and an all-India scope, as shall be explored in a later chapter.)

Unlike the Manava Dharma Sabha, which only *spoke* against the caste system, the Paramahansa Mandali was a radical organization: all its members—mostly Chitpavan and Saraswat Brahmins—had to pledge to abandon caste restrictions, and each initiate was required to consume food and drink prepared by low-caste or non-caste men (e.g. they ate bread made by a Christian baker and drank water from the hands of a Muslim).[71]

J.V. Naik argues that the Paramahansa Mandali also inspired the Satya Shodhak Samaj of Jyotiba Phule, who was a philosophical clone of Dadoba Pandurang (save for the former's extreme anti-Brahmin stance).[72] If this is true, and if Freemasonry was responsible for inspiring the Manava Dharma Sabha, then the Paramahansa Mandali was a "grandchild" of Masonry, and the Satya Shodhak Samaj its "step-child."

C. Membership:

The Paramahansa Mandali sought to spread its ideas through its own "missionaries"—the graduates of Bombay's Normal School. As they were being posted to other schools after graduation in 1848, Dadoba exhorted these disciple-graduates to propagate the Sabha's teachings and to enroll new members.[73] By 1860, the movement had roughly five hundred members in Bombay and the *mofussil* (the towns of the interior). A membership of five hundred was no mean figure for the time, especially

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[71] J.R. Shinde, *Dynamics of Cultural Revolution: 19th Century Maharashtra* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1985), 75. J.V. Naik disputes the taking of water from the hands of a Muslim, saying there is no evidence for this, although he adds that initiates had to drink milk tasted by the President—another ritually impure act for caste Hindus—see J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 148.

[72] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 154.

[73] Ibid., 152.

given the movement's radical and secret character. It demonstrates the powerful effect of modern Western ideas on young Brahmins (primarily)—those who had the most to lose by joining such an organization, and who knew they were running a risk by trusting fellow members to keep the Mandali's vow of secrecy.

Important Mandali branches grew up in Ahmednagar and Poona. The latter branch was "reputedly radical and even atheistic in character."[74] And in the Ahmednagar branch, which even had a Muslim member, "Kasam Muhammadaji [*sic*, Muhammadali?],"[75] selections from the works of Tom Paine and Voltaire were circulated among members.[76] This suggests even more Masonic links with the Mandali, for Voltaire had been initiated as a Freemason late in his life,[77] and Paine, who was most likely a Freemason, argued, in an essay entitled "The Origin of Freemasonry," in true antiquarian fashion (surprising, given the common perception of Paine as a strictly political animal), that Masonry was "derived from 'the religion of the ancient Druids who like the magi of Persia and the priests of Heliopolis in Egypt, were priests of the sun.'"[78] One wonders if this piece on Masonry was among Paine's writings that the Paramahansa Mandali members read. If so, it no doubt would have favorably disposed them to the Craft.

Although rumors of the Paramahansa Mandali's existence had begun circulating as early as 1851-52, in 1860 the membership list was stolen and made public. For most scholars, the exposure of its members caused the movement to collapse immediately due to the outrage of the orthodox, who learned of the contaminating meals taken by

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[74] James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 81. This diversity and radicalism is reminiscent of Freemasonic lodges on the Continent both before 1717—when the Grand Lodge of England began exerting its moderating influence on the Fraternity—and again in the late 18th century in Holland and France, during the "Age of Revolution."

[75] Ibid.

[76] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 138n.

[77] See Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 158.

[78] See Thomas Paine, "The Origin of Freemasonry," in Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), vol. 2, 832-33; cited in Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 154.

initiates.[79] For J.V. Naik, though, this would not have been enough to extinguish the movement; rather what finally did in the Mandali was the "Share Mania" crisis of 1865, "in which most of the reformers, including Dadoba Pandurang, suffered terrible economic losses, and were too stunned to pursue philanthropic work in the hour of their financial tragedy."[80] Moreover, the departure of the Mandali's President, Ram Balkrishna Jaykar, was an added blow to the movement.[81] Besides, the Mandali had planned to "go public" anyway, when membership reached one thousand. After 1860, though, a number of the ex-members "consciously and deliberately began to search for a system of ideas that could combine the European scientific outlook with that of their own society."[82]

V. PRARTHANA SAMAJ

While many members of the Paramahansa Mandali relapsed into orthodoxy and some became apathetic, others maintained their idealism but drew a lesson from the Mandali's failure to quickly destroy the caste system or root out other perceived injustices within Hindu society. In March 1867, an erstwhile Mandali member, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, Dadoba's brother, founded the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society).[83] Common membership and shared ideological features show that the Samaj was in many ways merely a resurrection of the Paramahansa Mandali, although secrecy was not a feature of the new organization. Other members included Atmaram's brothers, Dadoba and

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79 Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 141. This view is also supported by N.G. Chandavarkar—see Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Darkness or Dawn?" (1909), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 402.

80 J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India," *JASB*, vols. 49-51: 157-158.

81 Ram Balkrishna Jaykar's parting shot as a reformer in Bombay City was probably his collaboration in 1865 with Hindu and Parsi friends to form a committee to get "native gentlemen" to attend the visiting French Circus with their wives and families—a novel idea at the time, and one which was meant to promote an improvement in the status of married women and a new ideal of marital relations. When the plan was first carried out, others attending the circus were "stupified by surprise" and a hush came over the circus, "so spell-bound was the large gathering by the spectacle" of Indian gentlemen going out in public with their wives—see Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Religious and Social Reform. The Parsis," originally published in journal, *Indu Prakash*, (16 March 1885), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen Ganesh Chandavarkar*, 154.

82 James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 82.

83 J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India": 161.

Bhaskara, Bala Mangesh Wagle, Ram Balkrishna [presumably the same Ram Balkrishna Jaykar, who had been President of the Paramahansa Mandali], N.M. Paramanand, Bhare Mahajan, W.B. Naorangi, and V.A. Modak.[84] The two Pandurang brothers and also Paramanand and Wagle (and presumably Ram Balkrishna) were carryovers from the Paramahansa Mandali. According to Narayen Chandavarkar, writing as President of the Samaj in 1909, those

> who founded this institution felt that until we realized the oneness of God and the oneness of man, until we expanded our ideas of Brotherhood so as to feel that we are all creatures of the same God, India must be what she has been, low in the scale of nations, divided against herself, and without the ability to hold her own with the most enlightened races of the world. Oh! What a glorious thing it was in those years after 1867 to be a young man! To be a young man! To be young, I may tell you, was then very heaven.[85]

Among other things, Chandavarkar is attributing an incipient nationalism to these reformers—the idea that all Indians, at least all Hindus, constitute one primordial nation whose unity has to be re-established, and that loss of this unity has led to the Indian nation being "low in the scale of nations" and the inability of India to "hold her own" against the West.[86]

A. Ideology:

The aims of the Prarthana Samaj were "theistic worship and social reform."[87] The movement was opposed to idolatry and did not rely even theoretically on the authority of the Vedas. The latter is significant because it calls into question the very basis on which the movement could rightly be called "Hindu," at least in the eyes of orthodox Hindus. Also, most members did not believe in transmigration, a doctrine held by most Hindus. The Samaj's services included the use of the Maratha *bhakti* poet-saints, exactly like the

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[84] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 76.

[85] Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Darkness or Dawn?" (1909), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 403.

[86] It is interesting that, although Indians were already setting up modern industries in Bombay in 1867, men like Chandavarkar saw the basis of India's modernization primarily in religious, not industrial, terms—quite unlike the Japanese around the same time.

[87] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 76.

Mandali before it. The Samaj also supported the abandonment of caste,[88] widow remarriage, female education, and the abolition of child marriage,[89] making it ideologically identical to its predecessor, the Paramahansa Mandali, although less radical in behavior. With age and experience in prior reform movements, it seems, the members of the Samaj had come to recognize that reforming traditional Hindu society would not be effected overnight. In 1882-83, Pandita Ramabai, not yet a Christian, contributed heavily to the work among the women of the Samaj, founding the *Arya Mahila Samaj*, or Aryan Ladies' Society. According to Narayen Chandavarkar, Secretary and later President of the Prarthana Samaj, the Samaj

> is sometimes called an eclectic religion. It is said that the Prarthana Samaj has no religion of its own; that it borrows one idea from this religion, and another from that religion. But the more cultivated minds are now beginning to feel that every religion has something to contribute to the progress of man; that it is not by means of Christianity or Hinduism or Buddhism alone, but by bringing together into one field all the grand doctrines of different religions that a new religion must be formed which will suit the aspirations of the human heart. God has manifested himself in all countries and ages.... He had one law for all—the law of love.... This is the need of the present age. A new spirit is abroad. Our minds are awakened—thanks to the enlightening and enlivening influences of the British rule.[90]

This is pure Masonic thinking, and parallels the view of many Masons that Freemasonry was a latitudianarian and inclusive religion (see Chapter 4). Such religious eclecticism is anticipated by George Bease, editor of the *Masonic Record of Western India*, writing in 1865:

> There are, it must be admitted, many [societies] having for their object "Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth," but they are for the most part connected with, or patronized by, some distinct sect, shutting out those not possessing a particular creed, or following some particular worldly pursuit; but in the noble Order of Freemasonry, all those lessons of morality and virtue embodied in the Mosaic Laws... are brought into immediate and active practical use, unassisted by any

[88] Yet members were not required not to observe caste in their own homes.

[89] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India,*, 78-79.

[90] Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Darkness or Dawn?" (1909), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 408-09.

> sectarian zeal, unaided by any distinctive religious creed;... its followers are taught "to believe in the dispensations of Divine Providence, which belief strengthens their Faith, and naturally creates a Hope of being made partakers of the promises contained in those dispensations...." [T]hus uniting parties of all sects and opinions in one common bond of unity and concord, it cultivates "Virtue as the highest exercise of the mind, Honour as the primeval standard of every moral, religious, and obligatory act, and Mercy as the chief attribute of the Deity."[91]

In the 1860s, the American Mason, Albert Mackey, a scholar of Masonic symbolism and Masonic jurisprudence, declared to a large gathering of Masons belonging to various higher degree orders:

> And these brethren are all here to do honour and to give welcome to that other and distinct class of the Fraternity, forgetful of any differences of opinion, unmindful of their diversity of labour, remembering only that although their altars are different, and their theories in many respects opposed, yet they are all of one heart and one accord, in obedience to that great lesson of their common fraternity, that they shall learn to know Him whom they recognise, whatever be the temple, or the altar, or the sacrifice, as the Great Master Builder, from whom we have received all light, and who has taught us how to act; that mankind, when resting for a moment from their contests for power and place, may look upon these fraternal gatherings of our Order and say with envy and surprise: "Behold how these Masons love one another."[92]

The tolerance for various branches of Masonic practice, and the accommodation of great diversity *within* Masonry find their parallel in the Masonic spirit of tolerance of other religions.

B. Influences:

There is a debate as to the main source of inspiration for the Prarthana Samaj. Kenneth Jones argues that it owes its beginnings to the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal and Keshab Chandra Sen, who visited Bombay in 1864 and 1867. However,

> [t]hough the intellectuals favoured a form of Deism shorn of the accretions of orthodox Hinduism but encompassing the code of morals inherent in Christianity, it was felt that this could not be achieved through the Brahmo Samaj. To do so involved alienation from the mainstream of Hinduism, and meant discrimination,

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[91] *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 11 (Feb. 1865): 403-04.
[92] *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 6 (Sept. 1867): 217.

> antagonism and the loss of any possible influence upon the people of the Presidency.[93]

Clearly, the radical nature of the Paramahansa Mandali had shown the ineffectiveness of such alienation. Any influence on Bombay of Sen's 1864 visit was, however, soon dissipated by the Share Mania crisis which occurred the following year, when the price of cotton fell precipitously due to the lifting of the Union's embargo on cotton going from the southern U.S. to Britain during the Civil War. Moreover, Jones and many other scholars seem to be mistaken for at least one of the dates of K.C. Sen's visits to Bombay. In March 1868—not 1867—"Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen, one of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta, delivered a lecture on religious and social reformation, in the Town Hall of Bombay, on the 24th, before an immense assembly of European and Native gentlemen."[94] This was a year *after* the founding of the Prarthana Samaj. If this were a third visit to Bombay by Sen it is strange that the history books do not mention it, despite the crowds he was able to draw. Very possibly, historians have been repeating the mistake of an earlier chronicler.

Masselos disputes the role of Sen in catalyzing the formation of the Prarthana Samaj and looks instead to the visit to Bombay of Mary Carpenter, "an English social reformer and friend of Ram Mohan Roy during his last days in England," who found at the house of Atmaram in Bombay a group of educated Hindus whom, she was pleased to find, acknowledged "'one common Father in Heaven.'"[95] According to the *Masonic Record*, in March 1867, "Miss Carpenter, who has been earnestly engaged in propounding schemes for the advancement of female education in India for several months past, returned to Europe by the Mail of the 20th."[96] She returned to India the

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93 James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 82. See also Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 36: "In the early 1870s the [Brahmo] Samaj was rocked by a controversy over a legislative proposal, the Brahmo Marriage Act, passed in 1872. The law legalized Brahmo marriages, but did so by declaring that Brahmos were not Hindus and so were not subject to Hindu law. The social radicals had fought for this since it provided both a civil marriage freed from Hindu rituals, as well as a legalization of intercaste marriages."

94 *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 1 (April 1868): 22.

95 James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 82.

96 *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 1 (April 1867): 21.

following year, in November 1868.[97] Thus, the dates of her stays in Bombay fit better with the founding of the Prarthana Samaj. J.V. Naik, looking to the Manava Dharma Sabha and the Paramahansa Mandali, argues that although "the Prarthana Samaj was influenced by the Brahma Samaj of Bengal, the initial impulse for a renovating faith came from within."[98] However, Masselos, Jones, and Naik seem equally unaware of the growing influence and prestige of Freemasonry in Bombay during this period—which in and of itself was capable of providing the necessary ideology and a structural model for such movements. By 1867, there were eight lodges in Bombay City, and two were primarily Indian (i.e., Parsi and Muslim) lodges.[99]

Based on the Masonic-type ideological features of the earlier Paramahansa Mandali, both movements' outlook, and the unwillingness of most of the Hindu reformers to convert to Christianity, I believe that the founders of the Prarthana Samaj were influenced more directly by Freemasons and Freemasonry than by Christianity.[100] Yet, we also know the difficulty Hindus had in attempting to be initiated into Freemasonry in India before 1872 (Madras excepted). Might not the experience of being locked out of real Freemasonry, where Britons, Parsis, and Muslims gathered as "brothers," have impelled the reformers to try creating a "Freemasonry" within Hinduism—one which combined Masonry with their mission to reform Hinduism? Freemasonry often provided the template for other fraternal organizations and secret

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[97] See *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 9 (December 1868): 341.

[98] J.V. Naik, "Early Anti-Caste Movement in Western India": 137. Nevertheless, after its founding, the Prarthana Samaj maintained close relations with the Brahmo Samaj: "In 1872 [the]... great Brahmo, Pratap Chandra, stayed for six months at the invitation of the Prarthana Samaj. During his visit there was a plan to become a branch of Brahmo Samaj. This was prevented by Mahadeo Ranade pointing out the splits among the Brahmos of Bengal which might be echoed in Bombay, while Dr. Bhandarkar did not approve of the extremism and Christian bias of Keshub"—see "Prarthana Samaj ('Prayer Society')" <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/ encyclopedia/hindu/devot/prarth.html> [Accessed Dec. 22, 2000].

[99] See K. Gopalswami and Dr. S. K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* ([Bombay]: n.p., 1961[?]), 77-78. Also, A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 247-248.

[100] Although it may be said that in its ethical system Freemasonry was itself a vehicle, or "handmaid," of Christianity.

societies in the West: for example, Mazzini's Carbonari, or "Forest Masons," were inspired by the structure and ideology of "regular" Freemasonry.[101]

A curious statement in the Bombay-based *Hindu Reformer* in 1868 claimed that "'[t]he religion of the Prarthana Samaj can count its adherents by thousands, not only among the Hindoos, but among all the other nations on the surface of the globe. In fact, it is destined to be the religion of the whole world.'"[102] Certainly no contemporary reader could have accepted such a claim literally, for the membership for the Prarthana Samaj was puny and largely restricted to Western India. As late as 1882, its membership was only sixty in Bombay and forty-two in the mofussil.[103] It seems that the author of the piece is referring not to the Samaj itself, but to the socio-religious position the Samaj took. Hence, this statement may be more a case of attempting to identify the movement with Freemasonry, which *did* have adherents throughout the world, than one of making incredible and outrageous claims. Three years earlier, the *Indian Journal of Freemasonry* of Bombay offered statistics on Freemasonry worldwide which more closely fit the claim made above: "there are from 7,000 to 8,000 lodges regularly constituted on the surface of the globe, and several hundreds of thousands of members, belonging to all classes, to all nationalities, and to all creeds, are co-operating therein, and contributing, every one in his way, towards the diffusion of light and civilisation."[104] It seems likely that the author of the *Hindu Reformer* piece was informed by this or some similar Masonic source.

That Atmaram Pandurang and at least one other important "core member" of the Prarthana Samaj, Bala Mangesh Wagle, would become Freemasons within a few years of

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[101] See "The Freemasons in Italy," in *Daily News* (London?); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 2 (May 1875): 49—"Mazzini, a Freemason, was also a Carbonaro, but he substituted the Young Italy party for both." The article states earlier that when Napoleon fell, the Freemasons in Italy were persecuted, the lodges dissolved, and "gradually the Carbonari Society absorbed the old members, who were called cousins instead of brothers." And, in an example of the ability of ideas to spread quickly in the modern world system, Indians began translating Mazzini, the major theoretician of Romantic nationalism, into indigenous languages in the latter half of the 19th century.

[102] In James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 83.

[103] Ibid., 85.

[104] "Masonic Statistics," in *Freemasons' Magazine* (London); repr. in *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 7 (October 1865): 116.

its founding (while continuing to lead the Samaj)[105] itself indicates a felt need to be part of a truly global movement which promoted a "rational" mixture of Christian ethics (often thought of as "universal ethics" in Freemasonry) and modern science, but a movement which at the same time did not require one to abandon Hinduism. Freemasonry did just this, and, it even promoted a more ancient, "purer" vision of Hinduism (the result of Masonic antiquarian studies), and thus legitmized what these men were trying to do.

C. Membership:

The Prarthana Samaj "was the most important and well-organised movement of the time, being sponsored by leaders of society."[106] Although its membership was small, the Samaj attracted important members, like Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) around 1870, and fellow High Court judge, Narayen Ganesh Chandavarkar (1855-1923), who joined the Samaj in 1881,[107] a year after becoming a Mason in Lodge *Aryan*.[108] Chandavarkar occupied many positions, both in the government and in the Indian National Congress, of which he was the President in 1900.[109] Chandavarkar was also "an ardent champion of social reforms,"[110] and later served as president of the Indian Social Conference. He also contributed articles on socio-religious reform to newspapers

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105 D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*,188. Wagle preceded Atmaram by three years, being one of the first four Hindus initiated in the Bombay Presidency in Lodge *Cyrus* back in December 1872. See Chapter 4.

106 "Prarthana Samaj ('Prayer Society')." Dec. 22, 2000 <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/ hindu/devot/ prarth.html>.

107 Ganesh L. Chandavarkar, *A Wrestling Soul: the Story and Life of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar*, 181. Soon after joining, Chandavarkar became the Bombay Prarthana Samaj's secretary, and remained so for about 19 years. In 1901, he was elected President upon the death of Ranade, a position he held until his own death in 1923. See Ganesh L. Chandavarkar, *A Wrestling Soul*, 186.

108 *Membership Registry of the "Aryan" Lodge, No. 1709, E. C., Bombay* (for 1864-1963) (MRA), entry #44. Courtesy of Mr. Ramesh Chandra, Secretary.

109 Pansy Chaya Ghosh, *The Development of the Indian National Congress, 1892-1909* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960), 242.

110 Frank Conlon, *A Caste in Changing World: The Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmans, 1700-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 126.

like the *Times of India*.[111] Chandavarkar also edited the influential Anglo-Marathi weekly, *Indu-Prakash* (est. 1862), as well as the Prarthana Samaj's periodical, the *Subodha Patrika*.[112]

Chandavarkar's maternal uncle, Shamrao Vithal,[113] a leader of the Saraswat Brahmin commnunity in Bombay, and an eminent lawyer and social reformer, was a Mason and member of Lodge *Aryan* since at least 1880.[114] Vithal, who seems also to have been a member of the Prarthana Samaj as well, first took Chandavarkar to a Samaj meeting in Bombay in 1870, when the latter was fourteen years old.[115] One wonders if he also inspired Chandavarkar to join Freemasonry in Lodge *Aryan*. Lodge *Aryan's* connections with the Prarthana Samaj went back to its founding, for Atmaram Pandurang and Bala Mangesh Wagle, in addition to being founders of the Prarthana Samaj, were also two of *Aryan's* founding members.[116]

In 1901, after occupying the position of Secretary for about 19 years, Narayan Chandavarkar became President of the Samaj and remained so until his death in 1923. Throughout his membership in the Prarthana Samaj he was an active and prominent Mason: besides being a member of the *Aryan* Lodge, he also would become a member of at least two other lodges—Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, in 1888,[117] and Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, in 1908.[118] This means that for a number of years after Chandavarkar joined the Prarthana Samaj, the positions of President (Atmaram was

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[111] See, for example, Narayen G. Chandavarkar, *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 1, 14, 20.

[112] Ganesh L. Chandavarkar, *A Wrestling Soul*, xi.

[113] See ibid., 6.

[114] MRA, entry #34. Vithal was Master of the Lodge from 1887 to 1888.

[115] Ganesh L. Chandavarkar, *A Wrestling Soul*, 178. Vithal had brought Narayen to Bombay in 1869 for the better educational opportunities there, and served as his guardian —see Ganesh Chandavarkar, 9.

[116] MRA, entry #8. See also Dr. Nirbhaya Thakar and Chandrakant M. Patel (recompiled and revised by Vasudeo M. Patel), "Short History of the 'Aryan' Lodge," in "The 'Aryan' Lodge, No. 30 G.L.I., Centennial Jubilee Celebrations." (Bombay: n.p., date: produced for the lodge's centenary celebrations, held on December 9, 1978.)

[117] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 250.

[118] Membership Registry of Lodge "Imperial Brotherhood," No. 1041, S.C., Bombay (1908 - ongoing) (MRIB), entry #19. Courtesy of Mr. Causie Maarfatia, Secretary.

President until 1898) and Secretary of the movement were held by Freemasons, and both of them were members of at least one lodge in common—Lodge *Aryan*. Chandavarkar, Atmaram, and B. M. Wagle were also members in the predominantly Parsi lodge, *Rising Star of Western India*,[119] and undoubtedly rubbed elbows in the lodge with fellow reformers and Masons from the Parsi community.

Chandavarkar and Ranade (who took over for a few years as President after Atmaram Pandurang) referred to the Prarthana Samaj (and also the Brahmo and Arya Samajes) as "Hindu Protestantism":

> To the Christian Missionary, then, is due to a great extent the credit of the religious and social awakening of which the school of "Hindoo Protestantism" of the present day is the fruit.... [T]he school in question teaches, to put it in Justice Ranade's own words, that "the new Mould of thought must be cast on the line of fraternity, a capacity to expand outwards and to make more cohesive inwards, the bonds of fellowship." The lines will be *national* in the sense that the inspirers will be our own prophets of old, who denounces mechanical ways of living and worship, and making *Bhakti* a *sine qua non* of religion, preached the religion of humanity. But the development of those lines must receive, as it has received, its impetus from the spirit of Christ, too.[120]

What Chandavarkar and Ranade were after, then, was a non-Christocentric "Protestantism"—one which espoused the "rejection of idol worship; unity of God, brotherhood of men and denunciation of priesthood,"[121] combined with Enlightenment science, and the ethics and message of love found in Christianity and Bhakti: in other words, *Freemasonry*, or something very much like it (note Ranade's stress on a national "fraternity"). This Hindu Protestantism, said Chandavarkar in 1893, "seeks to build on the old foundations, and is glad to work with the fresh materials which Christianity has supplied to it because it finds that Christ, too, was a *Bhakta*, and the law of love which he preached has been the cardinal principle of the *Bhakti* School."[122] In fact, his list of ideal

[119] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising* Star, 188, 197, 218, 250, 264, 268, 291, 295, 306. Atmaram was even "Bhagwat-Gita bearer" for the lodge in 1880!—see pg. 213.

[120] Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Hindu Protestantism: Reform not Revival" (1893), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen G. Chandavarkar*, 44.

[121] J.R. Shinde, *Dynamics of Cultural Revolution*, 28.

[122] Narayen G. Chandavarkar, *The Speeches and Writings*, 45.

Bhaktas included among others, Christ, Muhammad, and Buddha.[123] This is remarkably similar to the view expressed by a segment of Masons that the founders of the world's religions were "Grand Masters" who taught the universal "religion," and whose eternal message was later corrupted by the organized churches which were built up on these Grand Masters' pristine teachings.[124]

Nor should it be forgotten that Anglo-American Freemasonry was not anti-Christian, and that within Freemasonry some Grand Lodges (such as the Swedish and the Prussian)—although not the British or American ones—required a prospective initiate to be a Christian. And we have seen the attempts among European Masons in India to maintain the Europeanness—and Christianity—of Freemasonry even in the face of Grand Lodge of England rulings (see Chapter 4; although, in the end, such Masons capitulated to Grand Lodge rather than become refractory). Some Masonic scholars, such as the Anglican priest George Oliver, saw Masonry as the"handmaid" of Christianity. So, within Freemasonry, a non-Christian would have been exposed to a certain amount of Christianity—especially what were called "Christian ethics"—although he would not have been required to give any credal assent to it. Thus, Indians attracted to Christianity, because of the efforts of missionaries, would have been able to find in Masonry a Christianity of sorts and yet not become Christian. Moreover, the antiquarian interests of Masons would have allowed them to push back the teachings of Christianity to a time before Christ—to the beginning of Creation itself, when the secrets of Masonry were first taught. And by a pleasant coincidence, the non-Christian who felt the power of the Christian message would find that the highest Masonic ideal was identical to the Christian notion of *caritas*, or divine love for other human beings. So, Freemasonry *could* be seen as a "handmaid" of Christianity, and yet that "Christianity," in light of the antiquarian doctrines of Masonry, was seen as primordial, and hence did not require an

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[123] Ganesh L. Chandavarkar, *A Wrestling Soul*, 181.

[124] See, for example, R.H. Forman's talk in *Lodge "Imperial Brotherhood," No. 1041, S.C., Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 51-52.

initiate to identify himself with the historical Christian Church in any way, or to make Christ superior to any other divine "Grand Master." This Janus-faced quality of Freemasonry, along with the prohibition on religious disputes within the lodge, is what kept instances of sectarian divisiveness at a minimum and allowed members with divergent views to bond ritually as "brothers."

Based on the activities of Freemasons in the Bombay Presidency during this period, a reassessment, then, is needed of the relative influence of Christianity on socio-religious reformism there.[125] Freemasonry's role in this process has hitherto not been taken into account by historians of modern India. While the missionaries were the first to level a full-blown critique against Indian society, the fact that Indian reformers almost never became Christian, but instead opted for deism and ideas of universal brotherhood even more inclusive than those of Protestantism (with its exclusivist focus on Christ), strongly suggests that they were inspired more directly by Freemasonic ideals and organizational patterns. Freemasonry would have been able to give them the intellectual tool-kit to counter the missionary attacks, as well. The fact that a number of these men—especially those in leadership positions—actually became Freemasons, further supports this position.

VI. THE BENGALI CONNECTION

A. Keshab Chandra Sen:

Since there does seem to be an irrefutable claim for some strong influence by the "Brahmo Samaj of India" of Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-84) on the Prarthana Samaj, it behooves us to ask what Masonic influences were at work on Hindu religious reform in Bengal.

In 1872, with the passing of the Brahmo Marriage Act, which effectively declared that Brahmos were not Hindus, and hence not subject to Hindu law, Keshab Chandra

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[125] See J.R. Shinde, *Dynamics of Cultural Revolution*, 37, for the commonly accepted view.

Sen's Brahmo Samaj of India underwent a split between radicals and moderates, especially over the status of women. Sen, leading the moderate faction, turned away from social change, and instead embraced the study and reform of religion.[126] After having met Ramakrishna in 1875, from whom he adopted the notion that all religions are true,[127] Sen organized a seminar to investigate the different religions and their founders. This closely parallels the study of different religions carried out by Masonic antiquarians such as Greenlaw (see Chapter 4).

In February 1878, Sen announced the marriage of his daughter to His Highness Nripendra Narayan Bhup, G.C.I.E., the Maharaja of Cooch-Behar,[128] a prominent Indian Mason-to-be:

> The Government of Bengal had had the young heir to the native state of Kuch Bihar (in North Bengal) carefully educated under English officials, so that he might become a capable modern ruler, and they had arranged that he should proceed on a visit to England. But his mother demanded that he should be married before leaving India; and the Government officials who were responsible for his training were most anxious that he should be married to a cultured girl who would be a help and not be a hindrance to him. Consequently, the proposal was made that he should marry Keshab's daughter.... The young prince and Keshab's daughter were both under age from the point of view of the Brahma Marriage Law. Further, the Kuch Bihar family were Hindus; and, consequently, the prince could not be married as a Brahma. His marriage would necessarily be a Hindu marriage; and there could be no guarantee that he would not marry other wives.... [But the] Government were most eager to see it carried out....[129]

Because of the young age of both the Maharaja and Sen's daughter, the marriage violated the Brahmo Marriage Act and resulted in a split in the movement, with those who rejected Sen styling themselves the "Sadharan Brahmo Samaj."[130] Moreover, the Maharaja's family was Hindu and his relatives did not want him married as a Brahmo because this meant he would never be able to marry more than one wife. The fact that the

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[126] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 36-37.
[127] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 57.
[128] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 37.
[129] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 53.
[130] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 37.

Maharaja declared himself a theist and forswore polygamy made the marriage more acceptable from the Brahmoist side, and the Government went so far as to extract "promises from the Kuch Bihar family, that everything idolatrous would be excluded from the ceremony, and that the marriage would be in fact a betrothal, as the parties would not live together until the young man returned from England, when both would be of age...."[131]

As it turned out, the young Maharaja's family double-crossed both the English officials and Sen: "The wedding as celebrated was a Hindu marriage; idolatrous implements and symbols were in the pavilion; and, though Keshab and his daughter both withdrew before any idolatrous ceremonies took place, the ritual was completed by the Hindu priests in the presence of the bridegroom in the usual way."[132] This does not impugn the Maharaja's theistic credentials, however, as he probably had no control over the last-minute change, due to his age (around seventeen years).

The Maharaja of Cooch Behar was the first Indian to be initiated—on September 5, 1881—in Lodge *Dalhousie*, No. 639, E.C., in Mussoorie.[133] He had to obtain a special dispensation from the District Grand Lodge to undergo the ritual, as he was under twenty-one years of age. Cooch-Behar, moreover, went on to become Master of Lodge *Anchor and Hope* in 1886 and 1889[134]—the same lodge in which Prosonno Coomar Dutt had been initiated (in 1872).[135] A few years before this, in 1884, when his friend and "brother," P.C. Dutt, was given a warrant to independently operate an American-originated "higher-degree" Masonic body, the "Sovereign Sanctuary of Royal Masonic

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131 J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 54.

132 Ibid..

133 G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India* (New Delhi: Indian Masonic Publications, 1981), ch. 4, 22. See also Walter K. Firminger, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times, Being a History of the Early Days of Lodge Industry and Perseverance, No. 109 of England* (Mysore: Printed by K.A. Korula at the Wesley Press and Publishing House, 1955?), 447, who states that the Maharaja joined Lodge *Industry and Perseverance* in Calcutta on January 6, 1882 from Lodge *Dalhousie*.

134 G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 5.

135 *How Hindus Were Initiated Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry and a Short Masonic Career of the First Hindu Mason* (anonymous) (Calcutta: Victor Printing Works, 1900), 29.

Rite of the United States of America"(in India it was to be styled the "Sovereign Sanctuary for the Empire of India"), the Maharaja was appointed second in charge by Dutt, who was the "Most Illustrious Sovereign Grand Master-General." By 1888, Cooch-Behar had already been Past Senior Grand Warden of England, which meant that he had for a time been an officer of the Grand Lodge of England itself.[136] In 1894, he was District Grand Mark Master for the province of Bengal. Mark Masonry is a "higher-degree" Masonic order which many British Craft Masons join. And in 1897, a lodge named after him—*Nripendra Narayan*—was established in Cooch-Behar with P.C. Dutt as one of the founding members.[137]

As Chapter 3 showed, when Bombay's Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (Scottish Constitution) was debating the entry of Hindus into its lodges in June 1873, the Brahmo and Prarthana Samajes were seen as the most acceptable candidate pools for Hindu desirous of becoming Freemasons. How many early Hindu Masons in Bengal were Brahmos or followers of Sen is unclear, but the fact that Keshab Chandra Sen's son-in-law was a Freemason—one who rose quickly through the ranks of the Craft—suggests a network of personal association connecting the two movements. And it is hard to imagine that Sen would not have been brought into contact with Calcutta-based Indian and British Masons, such as Prosonno Coomar Dutt, through the good offices of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar (assuming that Sen did not know such men already). Moreover, the attempts of P.C. Dutt to get into Freemasonry in the 1860s appear to have captured the attention of the Bengali *bhadralok*, as indicated by the fact that he called it a "matter of deep interest and importance to very many of my countrymen," in an 1863 letter to the Grand Master of England.[138] A familiarity with Masonic religious

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[136] Ibid.

[137] See ibid., 32, 45, 60.

[138] Prosonno Coomar Dutt, letter to Earl of Zetland, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, November 9, 1863, in *How Hindus Were Admitted Into the Mysteries of Freemasonry and a Short Masonic Career of the First Hindu Mason*, 3.

speculations from the early and mid-19th century may have been partly responsible for what came next.

In January 1881, Sen founded the Church of the New Dispensation (*Nava Vidhan*), which attempted "to synthesize the world's religions, blending elements of different faiths into a single set of rituals and beliefs." The red banner which bore the name of his church also had on it the Hindu trident, the Christian cross, and the Islamic crescent. Although Sen presented himself as the center of "the final religion of all time, far above Christ, Buddha, Muhammad and every other leader," his claim to supremacy was somewhat compromised by his message, taken from Ramakrishna, that all religions are true, and also by a belief in Christ as the God-Man.[139] When he publicly announced his new religion, on the table set up for the occasion lay "the Scriptures of the four greatest religions of the world, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Muhammadanism."[140] This is reminiscent of the habit of some religiously mixed Masonic lodges of keeping copies of the different holy books—called Volumes of the Sacred Law (V.S.L.s)—on the altar of a lodge in order to give equal status to the religions of all the members.[141] Generally, while the V.S.L. chosen to be placed in an open position on the altar would have been that of the religion of the presiding Master, photographs of the interior of Lodge *Felix*, no. 355 (S.C.), in Aden show open copies of the Bible, the Qur'an, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Guru Granth Sahib lying side-by-side on the altar.[142]

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139 J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 56.

140 Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 37. Beginning in February 1880 Sen had inspired his fellow Brahmo Samajis to begin thinking along the lines of some new religion, one based on a synthesis of the world's religions and on the *bhakti* of Chaitanya.

141 See for example, Nasarvanji Dinshaw Mistri, comp., *A Short Historical Sketch of Lodge "Holmesdale-in-the-East" of Mark Master Masons (72 E.C.), From its Consecration in 1865 to its Jubilee in 1915* (Bombay: n.p., 1916), 54: in 1902 in Lodge *Holmesdale-in-the-East*, "Bros. P.B. Jijibhoy, V.K. Vandekar and Mirza Hussein Khan respectively presented the Lodge with the sacred volumes of *Zand-Avesta*, *Bhagwad-Gita* and *Al-Koran*...."

142 In my collection of slides of Masonic photographs and drawings.

In keeping with the ecumenical spirit of sen's new religion, one of the eight principles from the statement of faith of the New Dispensation reads:

> I believe in the Church Universal which is the deposit of all ancient wisdom and the receptacle of all modern science, which recognises in all prophets and saints a harmony, in all scriptures a unity and through all dispensations a continuity, which abjures all that separates and divides and always magnifies unity and peace, which harmonises reason and faith, *yoga* and *bhakti*, asceticism and social duty in their highest forms, and which shall make of all nations and sects one kingdom and one family in the fulness of time.[143]

Most of these features—such as religious harmony, a desire for world unity, and ancient wisdom combined with modern science—are prefigured in Masonic works, and reflect what Thomas Trautmann calls the combination of "ancient wisdom" with "future wisdom" typical of Freemasonry.[144] For example, in G.H. Stapleton's *Hand-book of Free Masonry*, published in Calcutta in 1857, we read:

> From the commencement of the World, we may trace the foundation of Masonry. Ever since symmetry began, and harmony displayed her charms, our order has had a being. During many ages, and in many different countries, it has flourished.... The universal principles of the art unite men of the most opposite tenets, of the most distant countries, and of the most contradictory opinions, in one indissoluble bond of affection, so that in every nation a Mason finds a friend, and in every climate a home.[145]

Stapleton goes on to state that the "Usages and Customs of Masons have ever corresponded with those of the Ancient Egyptians, to which they bear a near affinity.... But Masonry, however, is not only the most ancient, but the most moral institution that has ever existed...."[146] He thus asserts for Freemasonry a moral stature superior to other and more recent movements.

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[143] In J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 73.

[144] Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 61. My gratitude to Eugene Irschick for bringing this book to my notice.

[145] G.H. Stapleton, compiler, *The Hand-book of Free Masonry, Adapted for the Use of Lodges, Chapters, and Convocations and the Instruction of Individual Members of the Craft*, 3rd ed., revised and improved (Calcutta: R.C. LePage and Co., British Library, 1857), 2-3.

[146] Ibid., 86.

For Stapleton it is a matter of pride, as well, that unity can prevail in Masonry despite extreme differences in religious thought. And again, from a piece lifted by Bease from the *Masonic Trowel*, an American Masonic journal, we read:

> Masonry in its lodge-rooms is a perpetual miracle of the pentecost. Parthians and Medes, strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Greek and Barbarian, Musselman and Christian, there speak the same *Shibboleth* and telegraph the same mystic signs.... We have, within the sphere of our organization, been enabled to illustrate the possibility of universal brotherhood; for we have successfully united on one harmonious platform all the diversified elements which enter into the grand whole of humanity.[147]

The reference to a number of the peoples and religions of antiquity serves a dual purpose: it reasserts the antiquity of Freemasonry, and it implies that the cosmopolitanism of the Hellenistic world has re-emerged in the 19th century, and that present-day diversity can be harmonized by means of Masonry, as it was of old. So, in Masonic sources available in India preceding the founding of Keshab Chandra Sen's Church of the "New Dispensation," Freemasonry portrayed itself as a universal "church" of sorts—one which prefigured Sen's "Church Universal." Within the lodge Freemasons claimed to have achieved, in the present, that unity of "all nations and sects" which Sen hoped would come about in the "fulness of time," and to have put that unity to practical social use through its inculcation of the virtues and of brotherly love. Both Freemasons and Sen saw the religions of the past as teaching fundamentally the same thing, and both reinforced the notion of universalism in religion, but Sen deviated from the Masonic trajectory in declaring that all religions culminated in him and his new dispensation. As with Sen, Freemasonry, too, had a "progressive millenarian" outlook:

> We live in an eventful period of the world's history. It sometimes seems that not only is the age of intolerance passing away, and the dawn of that age foretold by prophecy, when the nations of the earth shall blend in one common brotherhood, is upon us, but that through the vista of the near future we may behold the glory of the promised millenium.

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[147] *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 7 (Oct. 1868): 258.

> Great events pass in swift succession. Nations are born in a day. Revolutions hasten on the march of civil and religious liberty. Science lays hold of and subjugates the forces of nature. The whole foundations of the past are shaken. "The world moves, and we as an Order move with it...."
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> [A]mong the human agencies which have contributed to bring about this change in the condition of the world, the institution of Freemasonry stands preeminently at the head, both for age and influence; and yet it is but the dawn of the better age that is upon us. Even from the mountain tops of the highest civilisation, with the vision of faith, the first rays of the unrisen sun of the millenial day are but seen above the horizon. Selfishness is still the rule, and benevolence the exception.[148]

This millenarianism is progressive not only because it accepts modern science and civil and religious liberty, but also because it is gradual and unfolds in stages, with Masons playing an active part in ushering in the new day.

J.N. Farquhar argues that Sen was at heart a Christian, and that he revered Christ. While Farquhar brings forward some remarkable testimonials by Sen to this effect, he also argues that Sen was "not a systematic thinker."[149] Clearly, the doctrines of the *New Dispensation* movement were not what we would expect to see from a Christian, for the simple reason that the movement allowed for multiple paths to salvation (at least in ages prior to Sen's advent!) and Christian doctrine generally asserts that Christ is the sole path to God. Thus, we have to account for the *New Dispensation* using something other than a strictly Christian-oriented explanation. Based on the foregoing, Freemasonry offers a compelling partial explanation: not only are there ideological similarities between the movements, but the contacts between Sen and the Maharaja of Cooch-Bihar would have been necessarily a close one because of the family connnection.

The influence of Ramakrishna on Sen provides, of course, another explanation. Ramakrishna, with his *bhakti* orientation, would represent what Kenneth Jones calls a "transitional" movement. That is, a movement which "had its origins in the pre-colonial world and arose from indigenous forms of socio-religious dissent, with little or no

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148 I.N. Dolph, "The Present Influence and Future Mission of Masonry," *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 2 (May 1875): 53-54.

149 J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 66.

influence from the colonial milieu.... Transitional movements linked the pre-colonial period with the era of English political domination and, if successful, over time with the colonial milieu."[150] Nor need such influences be seen in an "either/or" light. The indigenous syncretism of Paramahansa Ramakrishna was clearly compatible with the religious universalism of Freemasonry (which was itself born in pre-colonial Europe), for Masonic religious theories, which had become fairly systematized by at least the mid-19th century, would have added a quasi-scientific legitimation to the spirituality and universalism preached by *bhakti*-type movements like Ramakrishna's. It may be argued that Freemasonry and *bhakti* shared a certain latitudinarian outlook which Evangelical Christianity did not, and it should not be surprising, then, that *bhakti* and Masonic influences, along with joint membership in Masonic lodges, characterized various socio-religious reform movements in Bombay, such as the Prarthana Samaj and other organizations; perhaps the *New Dispensation*; and certainly the Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Vivekananda.

B. Vivekananda:

A more popular and lasting type of Hindu reformism was carried out by no less a figure than that Master Mason from Bengal, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). Vivekananda was initiated into Lodge *Anchor and Hope* in Calcutta in 1884 under his given name, Narendranath Datta.[151] Although Datta was soon to gain fame as a reformer of Hinduism and a religious nationalist, the extent to which he, as Swami Vivekananda, was wedded to Hinduism is a matter of debate. While popularly perceived at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago (1893) as being an "'aggressive Hindu monk'

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150 Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 3.

151 G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 6. Narendra Nath Dutt was initiated on Feb. 19, 1884, "passed" on April 5, and "raised" on May 20. In early 1884, after the deaths of his father and of the "New Dispensation" Brahmoist leader, Keshab Chandra Sen, Narendra Nath Datta grew closer to the holy man, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and finally accepted him as his *guru* in June 1885—see Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 42-43.

defending Hinduism to the American public and the world,"[152] and although he could tailor his appeals specifically to Hindus,[153] yet, in 1900 Vivekananda declared: "'...we must show the spirituality of the Hindu, the mercifulness of the Buddhists, the activity of the Christians, the brotherhood of the Mohamaddans, by our practical lives. *We shall start a universal religion now and here.*'"[154]

The roots of Vivekananda's search for a new universal religion are usually traced to Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who explored religions other than Hinduism, and who "studied Sufism and played the role of a Muslim in his dress, prayers, and total behavior. Using similar techniques, he explored Christianity with the result that he had visions of both Christ and the Madonna."[155] Another contemporary influence, though, was no doubt the Brahmo Samaj of India, led by Keshab Chandra Sen.[156] This was the religious context of Bengal in which Vivekananda developed. However, non-Masonic scholars seem totally oblivious to his initiation into Freemasonry and the possible influence of Masonic ideology upon him. Since Vivekananda never said exactly what he absorbed from Freemasonry it becomes necessary to tease out, through a comparative analysis of his doctrines, any Masonic influence.

For Vivekananda, one could belong to Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, or other religions, and simultaneously be a member of his new Ramakrishnaite "universal religion" (which involved no conversion process).[157] Thus, Ramakrishnaism is unlike most religions, which do not allow overlapping membership in other religions, but it *is* like Freemasonry, which was seen be many Masons as the primordial universal religion.

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[152] M.D. McLean, "Are Ramakrishnaites Hindus? Some Implications of the Recent Litigation on the Question." *South Asia*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1991): 103.

[153] See Prabha Dixit, "The political and social dimensions of Vivekananda's ideology," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 12, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1975), 301: "This is the great ideal before us, and everyone must be ready for it—the conquest of the world by India... Up, India, conquer the world with our spirituality"; cited in Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 45.

[154] Swami Vivekananda, "My Life and Mission." See *Complete Works*, vol. 8, pg. 73; cited in M.D. McLean, "Are Ramakrishnaites Hindus?": 103 (my italics).

[155] Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 41-42.

[156] See ibid.

[157] M.D. McLean, "Are Ramakrishnaites Hindus?": 103

Very likely, this feature of the new religion came from Vivekananda's experience as a Freemason. Yet, lest the distinct and independent nature of Ramakrishnaism as a religion be watered down, it is important to note that "'Ramakrishnaism has its separate God, separate name, separate church, separate worship, separate community, separate organisation and above all separate philosophy.... It is claimed to be a separate religion by its own followers and it was declared to be so by its founder—Swami Vivekananda.'"[158] To complicate matters, in a court case beginning in 1980, the Ramakrishna Mission—the administrative organization of the movement—claimed that "'a Muslim, initiated into the religion of Sri Ramakrishna, while accepting the Koran to be true, also accepts all other scriptures to be true as well, while he remains faithful to his religion, he also accepts all other religions to be true.'"[159] Interestingly, McLean argues that this is something "no Muslim could ever do and remain a faithful orthodox Muslim. A like impossible claim is made for Christians."[160] McLean's views echo those of certain 19th-century British Masons in India who voiced similar concerns and objected—ultimately unsuccessfully—to Muslims joining Freemasonry (see Chapter 4). Today, too, a number of Christian denominations view Freemasonry with great suspicion because the it acknowledges that truth exists in other religions.[161]

Another feature of Ramakrishnaism which bears a strong similarity to, and very likely the impress of, Freemasonry is its uncompromising rejection of caste. Not only is there "'no place for any caste within the Ramakrishna Order,'"[162] it does not assign any role to the caste system. Its willingness to accept adherents from other religions further bears this out.

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158 From court records in *Civil Order, No. 12837*; cited in M.D. McLean, "Are Ramakrishnaites Hindus?":: 104-05.

159 Ibid., cited in M.D. McLean, "Are Ramakrishnaites Hindus?": 104.

160 Ibid., cited in M.D. McLean, "Are Ramakrishnaites Hindus?": 104

161 For example, in 1992 the Southern Baptist Convention heard, but ultimately rejected a call to investigate Freemasonry and whether or not Baptists could in good conscience be Freemasons—see *Christianity Today*, vol. 36, no. 8 (July 20, 1992): 46-47.

162 *Civil order No. 12837*, cited in McLean: 105-06.

Vivekananda also promoted a program of national regeneration, which may be summarized as containing four main elements: "the awakening of the masses...; development of physical and moral strength; unity based on common spiritual ideas; and a consciousness and pride in the ancient glory and greatness of India."[163] Pride in India's glorious past was accompanied by a belief in its degenerate present.[164] In these elements one can easily discern parallel Masonic notions of enlightenment, the promotion of health and virtuous living,[165] the emphasis on moral action as espoused by all religions, and antiquarianism (and the various political uses to which it could be put—for example, as a justification for democratic government).

It would seem, then, that Vivekananda (like K.S. Sen before him) was not content to spread Freemasonry *qua* Freemasonry, but sought instead to propagate it as a new religion (sometimes with nativist elements, depending on whom he was addressing)—one which embraced all others and which, like Freemasonry, did not require its followers to apostatize the religions they were born into. This new religion did, however, require members to accept the truth of other religions, which was potentially problematic (as it was, and can be still, for Freemasons—see Chapter 4).

VII. ARYA SAMAJ

Just as intriguing are the connections between Freemasonry and the Arya Samaj, a movement which became popular in northern and western India in the latter half of the 19th century. Founded in Bombay in 1875, the Arya Samaj's first Bombay branch president was Harichand Chintaman, who had been initiated as a Freemason in England in 1871.[166] Chintaman was also a co-founder—along with Prarthana Samaj members

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163 Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 745.

164 See Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, 44.

165 The pages of the *MRWI* were full of articles on the practice of virtue, and the journal often carried pieces dealing with health and medicine (for exmple, "Medical Hints," in *MRWI*, vol 6, no. 8 [Nov. 1869]: 300).

166 *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 10 (Jan. 1872): 362. Also known as Harishchandra Chintamani, or Hurrychund Chintamon. He is listed as an "agent" by profession in Masonic sources, and was initiated in 1871 in Lodge

Atmaram Pandurang and Bala Mangesh Wagle—of Lodge *Aryan*, in 1877. The lodge was created to screen Hindus in Bombay for initiation into the "mysteries" of Freemasonry. Although the Lodge did not get a warrant from the Grand Lodge of England to constitute itself until 1877, it did receive a Temporary Warrant from the District Grand Lodge of Bombay (E.C.) in November 1873—a full two years before the founding of the Arya Samaj.[167]

A. Ideology:

The Arya Samaj of Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), so seminal to a militant Hindu consciousness in the 19th and 20th centuries, seems at first glance an odd movement to be even tangentially associated with Freemasonry. Dayananda Saraswati, after all, preached anti-Christian and anti-Muslim sermons and defended the superiority of Hinduism—or, more correctly, the "Aryan" way—over all other religions. Yet the Hinduism which Dayananda Saraswati defended consisted of a rejection of all Hindu scriptures other than the *Vedas*, and it had no place for the caste system as it was practiced in 19th-century India, or child marriage.[168] He also had no respect whatever for Brahmins, "for their scriptures, rituals, polytheism, caste system, discrimination against women,"[169] or their support for child marriage. This is similar to Freemasonry's traditional distaste for priestcraft and "superstition." As noted in a previous chapter, the

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Harmony (London?). He was Junior Warden of *Aryan* in 1878-79. In 1883, Chintaman was excluded from Lodge *Aryan* for non-payment of dues (this does not mean, however, that he was "expelled"—i.e., excommunicated—from Masonry, which only happens for gross moral infractions or membership in an "irregular" Masonic movement)—see MRA. He was probably in England at the time of the exclusion, and this may explain why he wasn't his paying dues. Chinataman was also to run into trouble with the Arya Samaj—see Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 354.

[167] See *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 8 (November 1873), 281. The lodge's first meeting was to be held on Nov. 12, 1873. Why the permanent Warrant from the Grand Lodge of England took until 1877 to arrive is unclear in the sources. It is possible that the lodge continued to operate on the Temporary Warrant in the interim, but there is no evidence to support this. Most probably, the lodge went into abeyance for a few years until 1877.

[168] In the doab, Saraswati engaged in numerous debates with Brahmins. There seems to be a reference to him in the news section (for December 1869) of the *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 6, no. 10 (January 1870): 385—"A learned Hindoo Pundit at Benares is engaged in a violent and fearless crusade against idol-worship." The date fits the period when Saraswati would have been in or near Benares.

[169] Joscelyn Godwin, *Theosophical Enlightenment*, 320.

two major barriers to Hindus joining Freemasonry had been precisely those of polytheism and caste. Saraswati's stance on women would have been pleasing to Freemasons, too: Parsi Masons such as Manockji Cursetji (the first Indian Freemason in Bombay), Cursetji Nusserwanji Cama, Shapurji Bengali, and Dadabhai Naoroji had already taken an active role in female education in Bombay.[170] Saraswati also believed in the practical value of Western science and technology, such as the railway, telegraph, and weaponry.[171]

Saraswati believed the *Vedas* were the only revealed scriptures and the

> basis for *a universal religion*.... Of the quarrels between the various religions [something that Freemasonry attempts to solve], he wrote, "My purpose and aim is to help in putting an end to this mutual wrangling, to preach universal truth, to bring all men under one religion so that they may, by ceasing to hate each other and firmly loving each other, live in peace and work for the common welfare."[172]

Not only does this echo Masonic articles appearing earlier in India (see above), but Saraswati's goal of creating universal fraternity and common welfare through universal truth contained in one religion sounds remarkably like the three Masonic principles of Brotherhood, Relief, and Truth. Masonry, though, seeks to solve the problem of religious diversity not through the imposition of a single revelation or tradition, but by seeking the common ground of *all* religions—a common denominator in which all men can find agreement and come together as brothers for the betterment of society.

Before coming to Bombay, where he would help found the first branch of the Arya Samaj to promote his ideas, in late 1872 Saraswati left Benares for Calcutta—just after Prosonno Coomar Dutt had been initiated there (see Chapter 3). Saraswati had been anxious to meet Keshab Chandra Sen, who at that time was leader of the social radical faction of the Brahmo Samaj. Sen and the Brahmo Samaj exercised "a very wonderful

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[170] See Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Religious and Social Reform. The Parsis," originally published in the journal, *Indu Prakash*, (16 March 1885), in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen Ganesh Chandavarkar*, 156-59.

[171] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 115. For Saraswati, the inventions of modern science were either mentioned or alluded to in the Vedas—see Farquhar, 116.

[172] Dayananda Saraswati, *Autobiography*, ed. K.C. Yadav (New Delhi: Manohar, 1976), 64 (my italics); cited also in Joscelyn Godwin, *Theosophical Enlightenment*, 320.

influence" over Saraswati.[173] "The ebullient Keshub Chandra Sen liked the Swami from their first meetings, and they saw a lot of each other.... In those days... Keshub was universally recognized as 'the most vigorous religious and social reformer in the land.'"[174] Saraswati seems to have begun wearing the dress of the Brahmo leaders at this time, and he switched from Sanskrit to the vernacular (in his case, Hindi) in public lectures.[175] By 1874, he was in Bombay, debating with other Hindu sects, writing, and setting up the Arya Samaj. In January 1877, Saraswati left Bombay for the Delhi Durbar. "Here he met with other social and religious leaders in an attempt to form a grand coalition of all reform elements. In this he failed...."[176] A meeting *was* held with various reformers, however, and it included Keshab Chandra Sen and Sayyid Ahmad Khan.[177] Harichand Chintaman from the Arya Samaj of Bombay was also present.[178]

B. Influences:

Besides the fact that the first president of the Bombay branch of the Arya Samaj was a Freemason, further Masonic influences on the Arya Samaj can be teased out of the Masonic elements within the Theosophical Society, founded by H.P. Blavatsky and Capt. Olcott, and, in turn, their connection with the Arya Samaj. Olcott was already a Freemason when he got involved with Madame Blavatsky in New York in the 1870s.[179] Even Blavatsky, although a woman and therefore ineligible to join the Craft, was well-respected by high-grade Masons in America and Europe for her expertise in Masonry.[180]

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[173] J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 109.

[174] J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati, His Life and Ideas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press: 1978), 81.

[175] See Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 34.

[176] Ibid., 36.

[177] The inclusion of Sayyid Ahmad Khan suggests a more expansive aspect to Saraswati's religious reformism than would commonly be assumed, and nuances Sawaswati's Aryan chauvinism. One wonders what exactly Saraswati had in mind by convening such a meeting.

[178] See J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, 156.

[179] See Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 7.

[180] See Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987), 156-57.

By the late-1870s, Olcott was planning a shift of the organization's headquarters to India. In 1878, Olcott got in touch with an Indian he had met on a sea voyage from England to America in 1870, Mulji Thakarshi (1847-93), of Bombay's Bhatia community (a Gujarati trading caste).[181] (Thakarshi had been put out of caste a couple of years before, because he had gone to England,[182] which indicates to some extent his reformist inclinations, and also his need for a new community.) "Mulji, a wealthy Bombay mill-owner, had taken a philanthropic interest in the work of the Arya Samaj in India.... [and] wrote enthusiastically to Olcott [in 1878] about the movement,...Dayanand Sarasvati,... and Hurrychund Chintamon,"[183] the Bombay branch president. Thakarshi was also, from 1884 to 1892, an "active member of the [Bombay] Municipal Corporation,... a steady supporter of the National Congress and an influential member of the Bombay Presidency Association."[184] Indeed, there was not "a single movement for the public good in which... Thackersey did not play a conspicuous part."[185] Among these was his membership in the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay and the Cow Protection Society (of which he was the treasurer). He was, as well, a supporter of the widow-remarriage movement.[186] In 1878, Thakarshi was initiated into Freemasonry, in (aptly!) Lodge *Aryan*.[187]

In 1873, Karsondas Mulji, another Bombay Gujarati reformer, published a Gujarati pamphlet entitled *Ved Dharma* (the Vedic Religion), in which he declared himself in favor of calling the Hindu religion "Arya Dharma."[188] Karsondas wrote that in

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[181] Also known as Mooljee Thackersey—see Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 319.

[182] See "General Intelligence" for June 1869, in *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 6, no. 4 (July 1869): 151—"Mr. Mooljee Thakersay, a Banian merchant, (who was put out of caste for going to England about two years ago), and several other Banians proceeded to Europe by the B.&B.S.S. Co.'s Steamer *Neera*, on the 21st." This was the trip on which he would meet Olcott.

[183] Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, 162.

[184] C.B. Burrows, ed., *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 2nd ed. (Bombay: C.B. Burrows, 1900), 114.

[185] Ibid.

[186] J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, 135.

[187] MRA, entry #26.

[188] J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, 129.

the *Vedas* was to be found the "'nucleus of a pure religion.'"[189] In a few years, this Vedic pure religion would be coopted by the Theosophists to Freemasonry: "The Rishis of the Vedic school were, of course, *also Founders of the Masonic*."[190] This was a full two years before the founding of the Arya Samaj, but the same year that Lodge *Aryan* first began operating (on a temporary warrant from the District Grand Lodge). Karsondas died in 1873 and in the years that followed, Mulji Thakarshi, along with two other Bhatias "established the Veda Sabha to continue the good work" of Karsondas.[191] This shows that Thakarshi was already involved in a type of Hindu reformism similar to that of Saraswati prior to Saraswati's trip to Bombay, and that he did not see this movement to call Hindus back to the *Vedas* as incompatible with membership in Freemasonry.

Through Thakarshi, Olcott soon opened a correspondence with Chintaman and was impressed by what he was hearing about the Arya Samaj. To Olcott, it seemed that the Samaj was preaching a kind of "wisdom religion" based on the Vedas and even a pre-Vedic tradition. This is clearly reminiscent of the antiquarianism of the Theosophical Enlightenment. Both men thought it would be a good idea to join forces:

> To Olcott the Arya Samaj sounded like "a Hindu Theosophical Society." He wrote Hurrychund that 'If the Arya Samaj is what I fancy, I would be proud to be admitted a member and proclaim the fact in the face of all the Christian public. On May 22, "it was unanimously resolved that the Society accept the proposals of the Arya Samaj to unite with itself, and that the title of the Theosophical Society be changed to the 'Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj.'" Swami Dayanand was to be recognized as "its lawful director and chief." Olcott... later that May... confirmed to the editor of the *Indian Spectator* that the Theosophical Society had indeed affiliated with the Arya Samaj and recognized a Hindu as its supreme religious guide. Stressing the nonsectarian nature of his group, he said, "The Theosophical Society prays and works for the establishment of a Universal Brotherhood of races. We believe it will come about in time."[192]

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[189] Ibid., 29.

[190] A. Sankariah, "A Flash of Light upon Occult Freemasonry," *The Theosophist*, vol. 3, no. 5 (February 1882): 135 (my italics).

[191] J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, 140.

[192] Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, 162-63.

The fact that Olcott, himself a Mason, had as his main Indian contacts two other Masonic "brothers" is too intriguing to be dismissed as mere coincidence. It is not difficult to believe that the "mystic tie" is what made Olcott repose his confidence in these two men, "though they come from the ends of the earth," to quote that other Mason, Kipling, from his "Ballad of East and West."

Chintaman, it seems, was presenting his own ideas, however, rather than those of his master, Dayananda Saraswati. There were thus two versions of the Arya Samaj: one, intolerant of other religions, stressing the supremacy of the Vedas, and espoused by Saraswati himself; and another, tolerant, stressing a common wisdom religion,[193] and promulgated by the Freemason, Harichand Chintaman. Nevertheless, the amalgamation went ahead. In a letter to the *New York Sun* in late 1878, Olcott wrote:

> The Arya Samaj, or Fraternity of Aryans, is, under direction of its chief—the Swami (Holy Man) Dya Nand, one of the profoundest scholars and saintliest characters of our epoch—engaged in a warfare against *idolatrous Brahmanism....* Upon comparing notes with our Indian correspondents, we Theosophists found that the Samaj and our young Western society were teaching identical doctrines and arrayed *against identical antagonists—an unspiritual, bigoted, sensual priesthood....*[194]

The Theosophists clearly did not accept Hinduism as it was, but (exactly like the Freemasons since the 1840s) wanted its reform and saw themselves as pitted against its "unspiritual, bigoted, sensual priesthood." Such attitudes were given a formal status when, for example, in June 1878, the first European branch of the movement was founded—the British Theosophical Society. The fourth and final "object" of that organization reads: "'The Society is in connection and sympathy with the Arya Samaj of Aryawart, one object of which Society is to elevate by a true spiritual education, mankind out of degenerate, idolatrous, and impure forms of worship, wherever prevalent.'"[195]

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[193] A wisdom religion "as expounded by initiates from the beginning..." Olcott to *New York Times;* cited in Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, 164.

[194] Ibid., 166 (my italics).

[195] Ibid, 170. C.C. Massey, the son of the first Finance Minister for India was elected the first president of the branch.

Chintaman's misrepresentation of the Arya Samaj's doctrines caused the relationship between the two movements to sour before too long, and the final rupture came in 1882.[196] Although it appears that Harichand Chintaman's Masonically-inspired version of the Arya Samaj is what appealed to Olcott and Blavatsky—and not Dayananda Saraswati's doctrine (which would seem less "Masonic"), strangely, the Swami himself seems to have held a decidedly positive view of Freemasonry. In a letter, dated May 16, 1879, to General Abner Doubleday, the interim president of the New York Theosophical Society after the departure of Blavatsky and Olcott for India, the Swami states: "I will soon send you the manuscript of three ceremonial degrees based upon *'Aryan' Masonry*"![197] Nothing was ever sent, however, and we are left wondering what exactly Saraswati meant by this pregnant statement! Why would Dayananda Saraswati be promoting an "Aryan Masonry"? What did he even know about Freemasonry, and was he trying to form his own version of it? The first meeting of Blavatsky and Olcott with Swami Dayananda occurred on 1 May 1879, in Saharanpur.[198] If Saraswati first learned of Masonry from Olcott at that meeting, then within two weeks he was already conceptualizing an "Aryan" kind of Masonry. This seems implausible. The most likely explanation is that Saraswati had toyed with the idea of creating an "Aryan" version of Freemasonry based on what he was learning from Harichand Chintaman and Mulji Thakarshi. As his prominent followers in Bombay, they must certainly have informed him about the three degree ceremonies of Lodge *Aryan* and their significance, as well as described to him some of the Masonic principles.[199] Also, members of the Prarthana

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[196] Chintaman also fell afoul of the Swami for mismanaging his funds and was ultimately expelled from the Arya Samaj, just as he was "excluded" (although not expelled—which amounts to excommunication in Masonry) from attending Masonic lodges for non-payment of dues—see Michael Gomes, 168.

[197] Dayanand Saraswati, to Abner Doubleday, 16 May 1879 (from Meerut), in Doubleday's *Notebook*, 8: 45, in the Archives of the Theosophical Society International, Pasadena, CA—see Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, 230n. (my italics). Having found this gem, Gomes does not realize its significance, no doubt because he is unaware of the other Masonic connections between the Arya Samaj and Theosophical Society.

[198] See Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, 229n.

[199] Divulging this knowledge would not have meant breaking their Masonic oaths of secrecy.

Samaj showed great interest in Saraswati when he came to Bombay in 1874, prior to founding the Arya Samaj, and some of them were Masons.[200] This may further explain the cooperation of Arya and Prarthana Samaj leaders in founding Lodge *Aryan*—a cooperation which continued even after Saraswati himself despaired of the Prarthana Samajis for the same reason that he had of the Brahmo Samajis: their unwillingness to accept the *Vedas* as the sole revealed scripture. The Masonic affiliation of various of these men thus deepens our understanding of the connections which existed between the personnel of various important Hindu reform movements, even when those movements appeared to diverge or conflict ideologically in the "profane" world. Lodge *Aryan* appears to be the meeting place for the personnel of various of these movements in Bombay.

Why was Saraswati attracted to Masonry in the first place? Perhaps in Freemasonry's goal of dispelling superstition through spreading "light," and in its attempt to harmonize religious primordialism with modern science and technology, he found a kindred movement, and one whose reach was global. Saraswati, too, saw his Aryan dharma as universally applicable, and not restricted to people born as Hindus—much as Freemasons saw the Craft. However, Saraswati's espousal of the superiority of the Aryan religion was not in keeping with Masonic non-sectarian universalism. Technically, though, this in itself would not have prevented him from forming some sort of higher-grade Masonic body similar to, for example, the Knights Templar, which required one to be a Christian. The possibility of becoming a "higher-degree" Masonic body had been an option for the Theosophical Society a little earlier, in 1878 (an idea suggested by certain English Masonic members of the TS).[201] And by promising to sending his three degrees for Aryan Masonry, was Saraswati, like Blavatsky and Olcott before him, considering

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[200] J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, 130.

[201] See Michael Gomes, *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, 169 (my italics). "The decision to wait for the Swami's ritual was one of the reasons that hindered the development of the Theosophical Society in America after Olcott and Blavatsky left."

making his movement some sort of higher-degree Masonic order? In the case of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky and Olcott turned it into a Masonic-type body with no formal link to "regular" Masonry (see Chapter 4). Saraswati also opted out of any connection to Masonry (although his Bombay branch's leadership was Masonic), probably because Craft Masonry was too latitudinarian, and I doubt he understood enough about Masonry to know what higher degree bodies were. Moreover, to my knowledge, no non-Christian, religiously-based higher degree body has ever been created anywhere, probably because, outside the Christian world, there was never an internal debate over whether Masonry should be for, say, Muslims only, or Hindus only.

C. Membership:

The Arya Samaj in Bombay drew its membership from various groups. Initially, there were the reformers—many from the Gujarati-speaking Bhatia trading caste—such as Mulji Thakarshi and Lakhmidas Khimji. Prarthana Samaj members also supported the idea of the Arya Samaj early on, in 1874/75,[202] but did not contribute to the actual membership of it. On the whole, the Arya Samaj

> could not boast great support from…[the western-educated]…ranks of society. Its main success was among the lower orders.... The trading castes easily dominated in numbers, with at least fifty-five per cent of the total, but the brahmin proportion was quite considerable with forty per cent.... [O]nly one in five of the members had reached or passed matriculation standard.... Most of the Aryas did not belong to the top layer of their caste: in fact most of the names remain just names, for they are not mentioned anywhere else in the annals of Bombay.... The brahmins...were a moderately educated group belonging not to the intelligentsia, but rather to the lower middle class strata of schoolmasters and clerks,... And they lacked that commonly rooted desire for religious regeneration... detected among the Aryas of the trading castes. In fact, the number of brahmins...would decline over the years. Dayananda's general repudiation of brahmin leadership...was probably one of the reasons he failed to attract the Maharashtrian social reformers, who mostly considered brahmin leadership essential in the reform movement.[203]

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[202] For example, Dadoba Pandurang chaired a committee in February 1875 to form the Arya Samaj (albeit unsuccessfully so)—J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, 134.
[203] Ibid., 139-41.

Given this, it would not be reasonable to expect much Masonic membership in the Arya Samaj, since most Indian Masons were college-educated and were usually economically of the middling or upper classes (which allowed them to continue paying their annual dues). Thus, we find only a few Masons in the ranks of the Arya Samaj—and, then, in leadership positions: men like Harichand Chintaman, Mulji Thakarshi, and also the Chitpavan Brahmin physician, Dr. Anna Moreshwar Kunte, "whose brother Mahadev was professor of Sanskrit at Elphinstone College, and who was himself once excommunicated for participating in a widow-remarriage."[204] Kunte, the "one prominent figure"[205] among the thirty-seven Brahmin members of the Samaj, would be initiated in Lodge *Islam* in 1878, and affiliated to Lodge *Aryan* that same year.[206]

VIII. CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to untangle the skein of Masonic influence, direct and indirect, on a number of Hindu (mainly) socio-religious reform movements. Often, one needs to rely on a mass of circumstantial evidence—friends who were Masons; family ties (e.g., in the Pandurang family, and the Maharaja of Cooch-Bihar); overlapping memberships in Freemasonry and various reform movements (e.g., the Prarthana and Arya Samajes, Vivekananda, and the Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha); and close ideological similarities (Freemasonry with the Manava Dharma Sabha and Paramahansa Mandali)—in order to argue for a Masonic role in Hindu reformism.

One thing seems clear: by the mid-19th century Freemasonry was permeating Bombay's intellectual atmosphere with its ideas of a "religion" underlying all religions, and individual and societal perfectibility. It seems that western-educated Hindus began self-consciously to reproduce Freemasonry in their movements of religious and social reform. These became vehicles for modernizing ideals. Of course, when people started

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[204] Ibid., 141.
[205] Ibid.
[206] *Membership Registry of Lodge "Aryan"* (MS), entry no. 24.

their own movements they would have been at liberty to pick and choose what features they wanted from Freemasonry, whether structural, or ideological, or both. Theosophists, Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha-ists, Anjuman-i-Islam-ists, the Arya Samajis, and the Prarthana Samajis and their ideological predecessors in the Manava Dharma Sabha and Paramahansa Mandali all shared a common vision of progress and the perfectibility of society. They all sought the elimination of superstition and idolatry, the advancement of women, the promotion of modern science, and the end of sectarianism. And they were antagonistic towards caste and bigoted priests.

The argument here has not been to establish Freemasonry as the *sole* inspiration for socio-religious reformism in Bombay; only to assert that it needs to be placed prominently in the intellectual milieu of the period and recognized for the links it forged between the personnel of different groups. At the same time, we need to reassess the relative influence of Christianity (especially) on such reformism. While the missionaries were the first to attack Indian society and religions, the fact that Indian reformers almost never became Christian, but instead opted for a non-sectarian theism and ideas of universal brotherhood even more inclusive than those of Protestantism, strongly suggests that they were drawing on the Freemasonic model.[207] A number even became Masons, Vivekananda being the foremost among them at the all-India level. It is not hard to see why: Freemasonry, with its interest in a pre-Christian past helped to legitimate non-Christian religions while at the same time promoting a modern "scientific" and rationalized vision of society. Thus, the religious legitimation for reform and the goals of reform could be and were (as I argue here) provided in large part by Freemasonry. Moreover, a number of important men in the British power structure in India were Freemasons, as James Burnes pointed out in his speech at the inauguration of the

[207] As early as 1800 some Indians perceived that Freemasonry was quite distinct from Christianity. See, for example, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803. Written by Himself, in the Persian Language*, vol. 1, trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), 192: "They do not interfere with any man's religion, nor attempt to alter his faith."

Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital in 1843, and this must have lent the movement a great deal of social prestige and intrigued Indians.

If the number of Masons in the movements of reform looked at in this chapter have been comparatively small, it is important to remember that Hindu reformism represented the transfer of Enlightnment ideology to India, and that even "during the eighteenth century the Enlightenment [in Europe] had few adherents.... But in assessing the force or validity of reforming ideals, then or now, it would be most discouraging to rest one's faith or programme on a mathematical reckoning."[208] "Power is not in number, so much as in personality," wrote Narayen Chandavarkar, Master Mason and President of the Prarthana Samaj.[209]

Finally, the fact that Freemasonry had already contributed to the social reformism and latitudinarianism of 17th and 18th-century Europe, and had worked out within the arena of the lodge its own solutions to the problems of sectarianism *versus* universalism and science *versus* religion, provided a model for the larger society—a model we still conform to in the West. An important goal of the Hindu reform movements looked at here was not only to modernize society, but to elaborate a universal religion which could serve as the basis for a new, universal polity, although for practical purposes this meant a unified Indian/Hindu nation (whether Hindu or Indian was not always made clear) whose diverse elements would be harmonized by a latitudinarian spirituality which stressed fraternity. In the words of Narayen Chandavarkar,

> Creeds and modes of worship may differ but the idea that God is one is common to the whole race. And in the love of God, common to humanity is to be found that harmony which it is the mission of the Universal Religion not only to preach but which it strives to make an actuality of life.... Saints, therefore, ask you to look beyond yourselves—to a centre that is within yourself, and it is only when the seed of goodness will have been sown there that it will fructify into what is called Universal Brotherhood, Universal Love, and Universal Religion.[210]

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208 Margaret C. Jacob, *Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*, 156.

209 Narayen G. Chandavarkar, speech delivered at the Social Reform Association, Mangalore, 1900, in *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Narayen Ganesh Chandavarkar*, 88.

210 Narayen G. Chandavarkar, "Universal Religiou," ibid., 533, 535.

As a universal "religion," Freemasonry not only was more inclusive than the universal religions of Sen, Vivekananda, and Saraswati, it could also serve the needs of the British Empire in India as its civil religion, for the Raj had to find ways to bind India's diverse population to itself. This will be explored in the next two chapters.

A final note: here, we have gone beyond mere Masonic antiquarianism, which had been more or less a one-way street, where Masons of the West appropriated all religions to their universal system. Now, Easterners are responding and are creating their own organizations and "orders" inspired at least in part by Masonry and which Westerners could collaborate with (as in the short-lived case of the Theosophical Society and the Arya Samaj). Masonry provided a template of ritualism and graded degrees which could be copied and altered, whether in the Theosophical Society or Saraswati's "Aryan Masonry" in order to create a bridge between Eastern and Western religious thought in the 19th century. This template allowed Westerners and Easterners—thrust together by the political bonds of imperialism—to explore each other's religions within the context of something familiar: ritualism and occultism. Moreover, Masonic bodies would not have forbidden regular Masons from joining such movements—or leading them.

CHAPTER 6

THE "ROYAL CRAFT": FREEMASONRY AND IMPERIALISM, PT. 1

> "'Peachy,' says Dravot, 'we don't want to fight no more. The Craft's the trick, so help me!' and he brings forward that same Chief that I left at Bashkai—Billy Fish we called him afterwards,.... 'Shake hands with him,' says Dravot, and I shook hands and nearly dropped, for Billy Fish gave me the Grip.... I says to Dan, 'Does he know the word?'—'He does,' says Dan, 'and all the priests know. It's a miracle!... I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the Fellow Craft Degree, but this is a miracle. A God and a Grand-Master of the Craft am I, and a Lodge in the Third Degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priests and the Chiefs of the villages....'
>
> "'It's a master-stroke o' policy,' says Dravot. 'It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogie on a down grade.... I've forty Chiefs at my heels, and passed and raised according to their merit they shall be....'
>
> "I was fair run off my legs, but I wasn't such a fool as not to see what a pull this Craft business gave us...."
>
> (Peachy Carnehan, in Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*)[1]

> Every Englishman knows that the two watchwords I may say of the craft are loyalty and charity. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Those are their watchwords, and as long as they never mix themselves up in politics so long will, I am sure, this great and ancient order flourish, *and will maintain the integrity of the Throne and our great Empire*. (Hear, hear.)
>
> (The Prince of Wales—later Edward VII)[2]

I. INTRODUCTION

"Among the most baffling of causal factors in the Empire is Freemasonry,"[3] states historian Paul Rich, who notes a "close association between British Imperialism and

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1 Rudyard Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King and Other Stories* (Ware, Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 194), 132-33. This story was completed in December 1888—see Oliver B. Pollack, "The Man Who Would Be King," *Kipling Journal*, vol. 46, no. 211 (September 1979): 10.

2 Prince of Wales, at his installation as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, May 5, 1875; quoted in *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 88 (my italics).

3 Paul J. Rich, *Chains of Empire: English Public Schools, Masonic Cabalism, Historical Causality, and Imperial Clubdom* (London: Regency Press, 1991), 133. Rich makes the thesis that the English public school system was "*the* experience in the lives of Imperial leaders, becoming in a sense their religion. It was the *causa causars* of Imperialism" (139). Hence, the public schools were a "wellspring of the ideology of Empire"—see Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire: The English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism* (London: Regency Press, 1989), 123. Moreover, the public schools "were 'the breeding grounds of the masons of the late Victorian era'" (82). For Rich, then, Masonic lodges—both those attached to these schools and those in the empire, where the "school boys" went in order to seek their fortunes and live out their fantasies—were among the chief institutions that helped re-forge the "chains" of school ties throughout a school boy's life.

Freemasonry,"[4] which he considers to be one of the "chains of empire" that held the British Empire together. For Rich, moreover, imperialism's achievement "was not in its *imposition*, but in its winning ready and lasting *acceptance* from the ruled. Its cultural hegemony was accepted long after its political side was denounced."[5] Indeed, the above-quoted, cynical (if humorous) use of Freemasonry by two avaricious Britons to govern a conquered territory compels any student of Freemasonry in the British Empire to wonder how the movement might have been employed for imperial purposes. Like Kipling's characters, there *were* Britons who "thought that a secret society such as freemasonry could help to reinforce Imperial hegemony."[6] But was Freemasonry, then, merely a handmaiden of imperialism or, to use Gauri Visvanathan's term for British literary education in India, a "mask of conquest"?[7] Or was it a sincere attempt to unite the different parts of the British Empire into some sort of commonwealth and to create a universal polity based on "brotherhood"? Could it have been both? This chapter and the next will attempt to answer to these questions. But first we must examine the manner and degree to which Freemasonry was bound up with imperialism. This chapter will look at how Masonic ideology and ritual bolstered the British monarchical cult and contributed to the ideology of British imperialism, especially romantic imperialism. The subsequent chapter will explore the connection between the Masonic activities of certain British administrators and their attempts to consolidate and develop the British Empire in India.

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[4] Paul J. Rich, "Kim and the Magic House: Freemasonry and Kipling," in Marie Mulvey Roberts and Hugh Ormsby-Lennon, eds., *Sacred Texts: The Literature of Secret Societies* (New York: AMS Press, 1995), 324.

[5] Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire: the English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism* (London; New York: Regency Press, 1989), 17. "Empire," he says, was frequently more reliant on ritual than on arms or money. Their activities sometimes had little to do with overt political goals. This contradicts the view that socio-political rationalism provided an adequate description of motives and policies.... The public school traditions that affected the Empire had emotional undertones that had little to do with geo-political considerations."

[6] Ibid., 88. One of these was Cecil Rhodes, "who was a freemason but after considering 'using' the masons moved towards the idea of forming a new secret society 'to devote itself to the preservation and expansion of the British Empire.'" This shows that Freemasonry was not easily pressed into the service of particular political agendas.

[7] See Gauri Visvanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

II. FREEMASONRY AND BRITISH CIVIL RELIGION

Throughout history almost all states have had an established religion. The government supported the state religion, and the religion legitimated the government. Loyalty to the government was thus divinely sanctioned, and political revolt meant defiance of divine pleasure. (In multireligious empires the choice of an established religion becomes problematic.[8]) Even in modern secular societies, sociologists such as Robert Bellah have identified a religious *dimension* to civic and political life that he calls "civil religion," which is expressed in a set of "beliefs, symbols and rituals."[9] "Civil religion," though, is not what most sociologists would define as a religion, *per se*—which has certain cultic aspects, some initiation formula to know who's in and who's out, periodic gatherings of members, a statement of beliefs, and a moral code.[10] Nevertheless, this "religion" supports the state, and exists alongside established churches, yet is more inclusive than, and does not challenge the spiritual authority of, the established churches precisely because it is amorphous and unorganized.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Freemasonry provided British civil religion with an organizational structure, for it, too, encouraged interreligious and intercommunal tolerance,[11] and it stressed loyalty to the monarchy—the institution which is most central

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[8] The Romans tried to get around this by creating an imperial cult with the emperor at the center that would allow pagans of all stripes to offer their loyalty to the state. The Mughal emperor Akbar created the *Din-i-Ilahi*—a syncretic religion of the court which also stressed loyalty to the emperor.

[R]obert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on a Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 171. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) first coined the term "civil religion" to refer to a generalized religion that included the belief in "the existence of God, in an afterlife, retribution for good and evil deeds, and the need for tolerance"—see Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, book 4, ch. 8.

[10] See Richard John Neuhaus, "From Civil Religion to Public Philosophy," in *Civil Religion and Political Theology*, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 109. Neuhaus says that these chief characteristics of a religion are adapted from John F. Wilson, "The Status of 'Civil Religion' in America," in *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn A. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

[11] In the "long 18th century" from the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 to the reform bills of the 1830s, Freemasonry in England sought to transcend, and helped to ameliorate, the tensions between and within sects of Christianity, between philosophical skepticism and religion, between classes (due to the rise of capitalism), and between ethnic groups (as England absorbed Scotland and Ireland). Indeed, according to J.M. Roberts, Freemasonry "played a big part in the internal system of communications of a highly stratified and divided society." See J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* (New York: Charles

to British civil religion, because it symbolizes the nation. Unlike the amorphous nature of civil religion, though, Freemasonry had most of the characteristics of a "universal church," as defined by the German sociologist Ernst Troeltsch.[12] For example, while Freemasonry has no sacred scripture of its own, honoring instead the scriptures of the traditional religions, and although the official position of Masons is that Freemasonry is not a religion,[13] it nevertheless has a clear system of ethics which it expects its members to live up to (with sanctions if they don't); it has lodge rituals replete with religious symbolism; death and burial rituals (as well as its own tomb architecture, and even its

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Scribner's Sons, 1972), 56. In the early 18th century, when British Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews had less than full citizenship rights, Freemasonry offered recognition and high office to these groups. See, for example, Wallace McLeod, "The Universality of Freemasonry," orig. publ. in *The Philalethes Magazine* (the magazine of *The Philalethes - The International Masonic Research Society*), and reprinted by permission in *The Bulletin of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia* (n.d.).—see <http://or.psychology.dal.ca/gl/nsfm64.html> (accessed March 28, 2000).

12 Troeltsch characterizes a universal church as an inclusive, deeply institutionalized body that is often national in scope. It draws its membership from a broad spectrum and stresses the universalism of its doctrines; it has norms, sanctions, and hierarchies that are widely accepted. Its activities center around formalized rituals conducted by a professional clergy. And it is usually allied with power elites in the society, and is protected and supported by them. See Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931).

13 The official position (in the British and American Grand Lodges, at least) has been that Freemasonry is a "handmaid" of religion and that it is predicated on religious faith. Thus, the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), cautioned: "'As long as religion remains engrafted in the hearts of the Craft of our country it is certain to flourish… and be assured of it, Brethren, that when religion in it ceases the Craft will also lose its power and stability'"—*MRWI*, vol. 20, no. 11 (February, 1884): 437. This position was often muddled by Masonic officials themselves, as when the Deputy District Grand Master of Madras, Bro. Scharleib, summed up Freemasonry in 1869 as "that *grand primeval and fundamental religion* by which we are inviolably attached to each other, and in which the whole family of man may harmoniously unite"—Oration delivered by W.M. Scharlieb, Deputy District Grand Master, Madras, at the consecration of Lodge *Bangalore*, No. 1043 (E.C.), in *Masonic Record of Western India*, vol. 6, no. 7 (October 1869): 269 (my italics). Certainly the Catholic Church saw Freemasonry as a religion, albeit a perverse one. In the 19th century alone, Papal encyclicals and bulls were issued against Freemasonry ten times—in 1814, 1821, 1832, 1846, 1849, 1854, 1864, 1873, 1884, and 1892. In 1814, Freemasonry suffered persecution in Spain; in 1823, the King of Portugal abolished it in his realm, and in 1834 the Masons there were further persecuted. In 1896, the Catholic Church sponsored an Anti-Masonic Congress in Trent, precisely where it had launched the Counter-Reformation against Lutheranism and other forms of Protestantism in 1545. The choice of Trent was thus highly symbolic and alerted Catholics the world over that Freemasonry was as dangerous to the Church as Protestantism had been. The Congress declared that Freemasonry's religious doctrines were inspired by nature-worship and that "the various beliefs professed in public by Freemasons, though under many different names, might be summed up as Monism, Idealistic Pantheism, Materialism and Positivism. The connecting link between all was the 'identification of the universe with God'"—A.E. Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* (New York: Wing Books, 1970; orig. 1920), vol. 1, 34. Thus, we are presented with the image of two well-organized, universalist movements—religious movements, regardless of what Masons might say—locked in conflict throughout the 19th century.

own cemeteries)[14]; mystical and philosophical speculation and various origin-myths; it is national, indeed, universal, in scope; it draws its members from a broad spectrum of society, especially the bourgeoisie, military, and aristocracy; it is hierarchically organized, has its own jurisprudence, its own constitutions, and, in Britain, at least, was closely allied with the power elite. In fact, Freemasonry drew within its ranks many of the great men of the British Empire—not least, members of the royal family itself.

III. FREEMASONRY, ROYALISM, AND INVENTED TRADITION

A. The Hanoverian "Invasion" of British Freemasonry:

It is perhaps no coincidence that precisely during the period that Freemasonry was becoming the chief vehicle for British civil religion, the British monarchy gained greater control over Freemasonry and coopted it more successfully than any other monarchy in Europe. The first king to become a Mason was William of Orange, and, under the Hanoverian dynasty, English Freemasonry experienced a royal "invasion," first, with the sons of George III, and then with the sons of Victoria, followed, in turn, by their sons and grandsons—a relationship which lasted for the entire period of Raj.[15] Most importantly, Freemasonry placed British royals at the head of the Craft in England, which made them, in effect, the "high priests" of this empire-wide ritual brotherhood. Indeed, from the latter half of the 18th century to well into the 20th, the royal family provided most of the Grand Masters of English Freemasonry, two of whom went on to become kings (George IV and Edward VII). As the Earl of Carnarvon declared in 1875 when he officiated at the installation of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) as Grand Master: "The craft here has allied itself with social order—with the great institutions of the country; and, above

[14] Freemasons could even have their own cemetaries. For example, San Francisco had its own Masonic cemetary until the 1920s, when the city's four cemetaries began to be moved outside the city limits.

[15] For example, see J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, 208: "The ostentatious loyalty of English freemasonry was guaranteed by the succession of three princes of the blood royal to the Grand Mastership between 1782 and 1813, the Duke of Cumberland, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Sussex...."

all, with Monarchy, the crowning institution of all. (Cheers.)"[16] Thus, a double obligation was being laid on British subjects who were Masons: their loyalty to the monarchy was now based not only its being head of the British state, but head of the Craft, as well.

But how effective was Freemasonry in engendering in its members loyalty to the Crown? An early but typical example may be found in a letter from December 1793, from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal (E.C.) to the Prince of Wales, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, offering their "fervent professions of... unalterable veneration for the House of Brunswick as our *Sovereign*,"[17] and showing their contempt for republicanism during what was then a perilous time for monarchy in Europe (Louis XVI had been executed in early 1793).[18] Yet, while deploring "the fanaticism of democracy in our native country,"[19] the Bengal Masons refer to the prince as the "future hope of England," and to the Crown as the "palladium," or safeguard, of the Constitution, which was sent down in 1688/89 as a "gift of the Almighty Architect [the Masonic term for God] to build up and establish the happiness of those kingdoms which received it."[20]

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[16] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 87 (my italics). See also the Earl of Carnarvon addressing the Prince of Wales on the occasion of the latter's installation of Grand Master, April 28, 1875, in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 87: "... as far as my eye can carry me over these serried ranks of white and blue, of gold and purple, I recognise in them men who... have undertaken the duties of citizens and the loyalty of subjects. (Cheers.)"

[17] Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Grand Master of England, Dec. 27, 1793. Appendix No. 2, in Walter K. Firminger and Guy D. Robinson, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times, Being a History of the Early Days of Lodge Industry and Perseverance, No. 109 of England* (Mysore: private printing by K.A. Korula at the Wesley Press and Publishing House, 1952/55?), 103-04 (italics in original). The full text reads: "We view in the Commons the broad and solid Base, in the Lords the elegant and strong shaft, and in your Royal Father our most gracious Sovereign the August Capital, strengthened and beautified by his illustrious progeny[,] his own virtues and his people's love. We deem it our noblest right and first duty to defend and preserve unimpaired this *Sacred Pillar*, in which true *Liberty* securely rests, and which will immemorially support it, unless *Heaven* should permit the minds of Britons to be perverted by the spirit of *Innovation*."

[18] See J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, 208-09: in 1793, "at a particularly bad time in the Revolution because of the violence of the event in France, the *Freemasons' Magazine* printed a picture of the Prince of Wales as its frontispiece and mingled his feathers with masonic symbols in its title page." This shows that British Masons were rallying around the monarchy both in India and at home at precisely the same time.

[19] Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Dec. 27, 1793; in Walter K. Firminger and Guy D. Robinson, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times*, 103-04.

[20] Ibid., 103.

So, while endorsing political notions arising from the "Glorious Revolution" and the Enlightenment, including a limited monarchy, the Bengal Masons support the monarchy as the guarantor of British constitutional liberties—a claim no other monarch in Europe could then make.

Not only that, but British royals also seem to have been true to the Masonic principle of brotherhood, at least at events which were meant for Masons. The Indo-Persian traveler, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan noted in 1800 that at a large garden party for Masons which the Prince of Wales attended, many of the guests "were of the lower order of people, whose spirits, being exhilarated... by the gay scene before them... talked in the most familiar style of their *Brother George* [i.e., the Prince of Wales and future George IV]."[21] Taleb Khan seems surprised by this leveling effect of Freemasonry, which was a far cry from the absolutist model of monarchy found on the Continent.

How did members of the Royal Family who were Masons see the political role of the Craft? The future Edward VII's acceptance speech on the occasion of his being made Grand Master made it clear that he believed Masonry to be a pillar of the British imperial state:

> Every Englishman knows that the two watchwords... of the craft are loyalty and charity. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Those are their watchwords, and as long as they never mix themselves up in politics so long will... this great and ancient order flourish, *and will maintain the integrity of the Throne and our great Empire.* (Hear, hear.)[22]

Thus, Edward was obligating Masons not only to actively support the monarchy, but to maintain the empire, as well—another kind of double obligation.[23] At the banquet in the

[21] Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803. Written by Himself, in the Persian Language*, vol. 1, trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), 193.

[22] Prince of Wales, April 28, 1875; quoted in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 88 (my italics). It is remarkable how oblivious British Masons were to such blatantly political statements! Perhaps for them "politics" meant party politics.

[23] See Heinz Gollwitzer, *Europe in the Age of Imperialism, 1880-1914* (London: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969), 114—"Queen Victoria always encouraged her ministers whenever they pursued imperialist policies and she herself was responsible for a number of initiatives in that direction. For her successors, the creed of empire, in a more or less imperialistic sense, became a matter of course."

Freemasons' Tavern following the installation of his brother, the Duke of Connaught declared: "I am sure that... the fact that the great mottoes of the craft are 'loyalty' and 'charity' is alone sufficient to make the Royal Family take the deepest interest in a craft with such good mottoes as those."[24] Indeed! This explains why, for example, when Parliament passed the Unlawful Societies Act in 1799 (when the future George IV was Grand Master), decreeing that all societies demanding a sacred oath from their members be made illegal, Freemasonry—the largest such society—was exempted.[25]

The 1799 Act was preceded in the same year by a bill against the Freemasons, but it "made no headway in Parliament."[26] It may be to this that the Masons of Madras alluded in an address to Lord Moira (the Marquis of Hastings) in 1813, when they declared: "we are not uninformed of the protection and support afforded by your Lordship to the Fraternity, when it was most unjustly accused of having leagued against Altar and Throne: and when your Lordship directed the Public eye towards the Heir Apparent and the other Members of His Majesty's Illustrious Family, who[,] enrolled in the highest order of Masonry[,] afforded as irrefragable proof that to 'Fear God and Honour the King' was an injunction regarded as the Foundation Stone of the Masonic Fabric...."[27]

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[24] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 88b.

[25] See A.E. Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, vol. 2 (New York: Wing Books, 1970; 1920), 73. It appears that a similar bill against secret societies was passed during the Chartist period of the early 19th century, and, once again, only Freemasonry was exempted—see "Progress of Freemasonry in Scotland," in *London Freemason*; reprinted in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 7 (October, 1875): 249.

[26] J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, 208.

[27] Address of the Freemasons of Madras to Lord Moira, in *Madras Government Gazette*, September 23, 1813; reprinted in Pratap Chandra Chunder, *The Sons of Mystery: A Masonic Miscellany From Old Calcutta* (Calcutta: Jayanti Press, 1973), 102-03.

> enrolled in the highest order of Masonry[,] afforded as irrefragable proof that to "Fear God and Honour the King" was an injunction regarded as the Foundation Stone of the Masonic Fabric....[28]

Much later, in 1875, Henry Morland, the Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, spoke of the Prince of Wales as having "accepted the *throne* of the Freemasons of England,"[29] reinforcing through metaphor the connection between civil government and Masonic government—between the Raj and the Lodge.

Thus, the connection between Freemasonry and the royal family was mutually beneficial: Masons inculcated allegiance to the throne and empire, and the throne lent its prestige and protection to the Craft.[30] For example, on the eve of the Prince of Wales' visit to India in 1875, Masons there clearly appreciated the benefits and prestige that would accrue to the Craft in India from having him on the subcontinent. According to the *Masonic Record of Western India*, "This being the first visit to India of a Grand Master, the effect will be most beneficial to the Order, more so as he is Heir to the Throne of England."[31] In 19th-century India, this royal connection with Freemasonry was regularly driven home by the Masonic press.[32]

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[28] Address of the Freemasons of Madras to Lord Moira, in *Madras Government Gazette*, September 23, 1813; reprinted in Pratap Chandra Chunder, *The Sons of Mystery: A Masonic Miscellany From Old Calcutta* (Calcutta: Jayanti Press, 1973), 102-03.

[29] Henry Morland, at Quarterly Communication of G.L.A.S.F.I., July 24, 1875; in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 6 (September 1875): 234 (my italics).

[30] The desire for protection should not be underestimated. Soon after the formation of the Grand Lodge of England and the spread of Masonry to the Continent, the early and mid-18th century was marked by its persecution by European governments. For example, the States-General of Holland prohibited Freemasonry (1735); Sweden suppressed the Craft (1738); Pope Clement XII condemned Freemasonry and stated that Catholic Masons were automatically excommunicated (1738); the Inquisition persecuted Masons in Florence (1739); Philip V of Spain issued an edict against Freemasonry (1740), and his successor, Ferdinand VII, condemned Freemasons to death without trial (1751); Masons were persecuted in Germany (1745); the Sultan opposed the introduction of Freemasonry into the Ottoman Empire (1748); and in 1751 Pope Benedict confirmed and renewed Clement XII's earlier Bull—see A.E. Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, vol. 2, 53-60. Getting the monarchy of Britain—a major world power—on the side of Freemasonry (and even into it) must have conferred upon the Craft a new-found respect in the eyes of other states.

[31] Editor (i.e., George Bease), *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 8 (November 1875): 281.

[32] See, for example, "Freemasonry," in *The Graphic*; reprinted in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 11 (February 1875): 409-10— "Our William III. was a Mason, initiated in 1690. In later times we have George IV., a "good" Mason, as well as Grand Worshipful Master of the Order. Under his auspices the Prince of Wales Lodge (No. 259) was founded, and his brothers, the Dukes of York, Cumberland (King of Hanover), Clarence (William IV.), Kent (father of her present Majesty), and Sussex (Grand Master for thirty years), and Prince

(As an aside, upon ascending the royal throne, British monarchs, if Grand Masters themselves, relinquished that office and assumed the title of "Patron" and "Protector of the Craft," which paralleled the monarch's role as "Defender of the Faith" in relation to the Church of England. The precedent of resignation had been established by George IV, who relinquished the Grand Mastership a couple of years into the Regency. Upon Edward's accession to the royal throne, the Masons of England chose his brother, the Duke of Connaught, as Grand Master.[33] Queen Victoria, although unable as a woman to be initiated into Freemasonry, was also considered a "Patron of English Freemasonry."[34])

B. British Invented Tradition and Freemasonry:

After the Revolution of 1688, the British aristocracy and monarchy employed what Hobsbawm and Ranger term "invented tradition" to bolster their position in uncertain and changing political circumstances.[35] In the case of the monarchy, the decline

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William of Gloucester were all illustrious and distinguished craftsmen. At the present time it is hardly necessary to remind our readers that the Prince of Wales and the Dukes of Edinburgh and Connaught are Masons." Alfred Ernest Albert, Duke of Edinburgh (b. 1844), was Victoria's second son, and Arthur William Patrick, Duke Connaught and Strathearn (b. 1850), was her third. See also "The Prince of Wales a Freemason," in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 12 (March 1869): 457. See also *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 85—"Ever since the present dynasty of Hanover has occupied the Throne of England the members of the Royal Family have always been patrons of the Order, and the list has included the Duke of Cumberland, the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.), the Duke of York, the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.), the Duke of Kent (father of her Majesty the Queen), Prince William of Gloucester, and more especially the late Duke of Sussex, who for 25 years filled the office of Grand Master."

[33] Edward's decision might have been based on the possibility that maintaining the position of Grand Master could have caused controversy, both within the Craft (for bringing politics too visibly close to the Lodge), and outside the Masonic fraternity, where suspicions about Masons were always cropping up, especially in Catholic countries. Even among Anglicans and other Protestants suspicions were voiced by Church leaders regarding the potentially heretical nature of Freemasonry.

[34] See, for example, Nasarvanji Dinshaw Mistri, comp., *A Short Historical Sketch of Lodge "Holmesdale-in-the-East" of Mark Master Masons" (72 E.C.), From its Consecration in 1865 to its Jubilee in 1915* (Bombay: n.p., 1916), 47. See also *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (second quarter issue: March-June, 1845), 2nd (new) series (London): 134—at a meeting of Masons in Bombay in 1844, the "'Queen, the patroness of the Craft, daughter and niece of two of the most distinuished of all Masons,' was proposed by the Prov. Grand Master of Western India [i.e., James Burnes], and drunk with due honours."

[35] See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). The expansion of royal ceremonial and exaltation of the stature of the monarch began with George III, but was carried to its fullest development (at least for another three-quarters of a century) by the Freemason, and erstwhile Grand Master, George IV (r. 1820-30). Aside from a brief loss of popularity over the "Caroline Affair"—a nasty controversy with his wife which was played up in the press—his efforts to aggrandize the stature of the monarch as symbol of the nation seem to have been

in royal political influence actually "made it easier for the public to distinguish between monarch and minister and to celebrate the former without giving allegiance to the latter."[36] This "celebration" often involved the creation, enlargement, and expansion[37] of medieval-style knightly orders,[38] which "exalt both the giver and the recipient and bind them together."[39] This fictive feudal relationship reinforced the metonomy of "Crown" for "Government."

In the 19th century, the age of "invented tradition" on a grand and planetary scale had arrived,[40] and it was both a key element in the "revival of imperialism" in the 1870s,[41] and crucial in consolidating the British Empire, for at one stroke the British monarch gained a new luster by being transformed into a universal emperor, which

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successful: "More than most of his contemporaries, he realised not only that the grandeur and opulence of royalty are inseparable from its function, but that they become more important *as the function becomes more titular and the man in the street becomes more sophisticated.* He was the first monarch to view his role with an eye influenced by the Romantic Movement and to see the traditional ceremonies of monarchy as events which could be embellished by looting the past, real or imaginary, to provide backdrops for present majesty"—J.M. Golby and A.W. Purdue, *The Monarchy and the British People, 1760 to the Present* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1988), 39 (my italics). George IV's Masonic experience would have given him an advantage in these efforts.

[36] Linda Colley, "The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation, 1760-1820," pp. 94-129, *Past and Present*, no. 102 (February 1984): 126.

[37] To "enlarge" an Order means to increase the number of individuals allowed into the order; to "extend" an Order means to allow individuals from a greater diversity of social rankings into the Order by the addition of lower degrees/ranks within that order. I am most grateful to Professor Thomas Barnes, of the U.C. Berkeley Law School and History department for this explanation, as well as for his elucidation of the difference between a title and an honor and other general questions relating to them.

[38] George III, the "patriot king"—in a further promotion of medieval chivalry, and taking his cue from Maria Theresa and Joseph II of Austria in attempting to boost the prestige of the monarch and further identify the monarch with the state and the growing phenomenon of patriotism—determined "to exploit and expand the existing honours system and create new orders of chivalry so as to emphasize *the supportive role of the aristocracy* and *reward the growing state meritocracy*. The Order of the Bath was enlarged in 1772; the Order of the Garter was extended in 1786 and 1805; and the Order of St. Patrick was founded in 1783"—Linda Colley, "The Apotheosis of George III," 99-100 (my italics). George III was controversial in his own day, for he challenged the Constitution of 1689 by attempting to increase the power of the monarchy at the expense of Parliament. His loss of America undermined this effort.

[39] J.M. Golby and A.W. Purdue, *The Monarchy and the British People*, 22.

[40] See David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition' c. 1820-1977," pp. 101-164 in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*. Cannadine refers to this as the second great phase of "royal efflorescence" in Europe, the first having occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries and centered on absolutism (161), though he neglects developments in the late-18th and early-19th centuries that Linda Colley examines.

[41] See Donald C. Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defense, 1870-1914* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 31. The mid-1870s gave rise to the current and popular use of the word "imperialism" to mean "the extension of political power over non-European areas and peoples" (36).

allowed ritual ties to be established between the monarch and colonial subjects—whether subsidiary rulers or commoners. Beginning with Queen Victoria's assumption of the title of "Empress of India" in 1877, grandeur in royal pageantry increased. Victoria was persuaded to take part in these ceremonies, and her jubilees were immense, splendid affairs which were celebrated throughout the Empire.[42] As Lady Betty Balfour, the daughter of the romantic and medievalist viceroy, Lord Lytton, explained it: "When the administration of India was transferred from the East India Company to the Sovereign, it seemed in the eyes of her Indian subjects and feudatories that the impersonal power of an administrative abstraction had been replaced by the direct personal authority of a human being."[43] In the colonies, where political rights often did not exist, or were fewer than what obtained in Britain itself, the ritual status of the British monarch became even more pivotal in consolidating imperial rule.[44]

While there is a temptation to conclude that the invention of tradition was a self-conscious plot by British statesmen to dominate the masses both at home and in the

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[42] Continuing this trend, Edward VII followed in George III's and George IV's footsteps, once he became king, and promoted a latter-day reformulation of the monarch as grand symbol of the imperial state. Such invented tradition was meant to establish a continuity with a medieval state and its archaic traditions, even though (and precisely because) the new state had by now radically metamorphosed into a modern industrial society and a vast world empire. Medievalism also promoted the worth of the individual in an age where he felt increasingly unimportant. So, for example, we find that the "rites of passage of monarchy were thus transformed into grand projections of those of ordinary subjects: the Jubilees, Victoria's funeral, the Coronation and funeral of Edward..., the Coronation and Durbar of George V.... The pace of change also conferred certain attractions on an institution which was decreasingly part of the efficient side of the constitution: crowns, robes and gilded coaches stood out and gave reassuring appearance of continuity in the age of motor cars and the telephone"— J.M. Golby and A.W. Purdue, *The Monarchy and the British People*, 82.

[43] Lady Betty Balfour, *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876 to 1880: Compiled from Letters and Official Papers* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899), 106. Or as an ex-Governor of Bombay, Sir Richard Temple, put it: "the sense of [Indians] being in a direct relation to the British Crown, as subjects towards their Sovereign, must arouse and elevate the sentiments of which their imaginative temperament is susceptible"—Richard Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India* (London: John Murray, 1882), 509.

[44] Indian subjects of the Crown, however, soon learned that there were two governments of that crown—one in Calcutta and one in London—and this realization provided Indians with some maneuvering room, while still remaining loyal to the British monarch.

empire,[45] such a cynical interpretation should be approached with caution. The process of exalting the British monarchy through invented tradition "may more realistically be viewed as a natural adaptation of a long-lived institution, one which always attempted to meet the psychological need of a populace to identify authority and legitimacy in a person and a family rather than a mechanism."[46]

Freemasonry contributed to the invention of tradition in two ways: by inventing its own traditions which could intersect with state invented tradition, and by directly bolstering the British monarchy, and indeed, in coopting the monarchy.[47] Freemasonry lent itself to the medievalism of modern invented tradition since it traced its roots (most immediately) back to the stone-masons who built the medieval cathedrals. This was not a chivalric, or knightly, medievalism, to be sure, but 19th-century Freemasonry also "discovered" an ancient connection between the "sword" (i.e., chivalric orders) and the "trowel":

> The Royal Order [i.e., a Scottish Masonic body] is in the opinion of Bro. W.J. Hughan and other well-informed brethren, undoubtedly the most ancient Order of Masonic knighthood in existence. Its peculiarity of uniting the sword and the trowel goes far—if its antiquity is admitted—to prove that the legendary connection of knightly orders with Freemasonry is no mere *myth*."[48]

Perhaps the most well-known chivalric order under the Masonic umbrella, though, was that of the Knights Templar, created (or "revived," as many of its supporters claimed) in

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[45] See, for example, Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 18—"These rituals kept millions of people in their place. To orchestrate them, the British Imperialists became impresarios, directing a worldwide extravaganza."

[46] J.M. Golby and A.W. Purdue, *The Monarchy and the British People*, 82.

[47] Of course, it was simultaneously coopted by the British monarchy (see below).

[48] "The Conflict of Jurisdiction," in *Freemasons' Magazine*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 9 (December 1869): 333. See also "The Royal Order of Scotland," in *London Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 6 (September 1871): 214—"Indeed, it [i.e., the Royal Order of Scotland] is well authenticated to be the oldest, and perhaps the only genuine, order of *Masonic* knighthood, as in it we have an intimate relation between the *sword* and the *trowel*, which is shunned by all other orders. The order of the *Masonic* Knights Templar has doubtless been instituted by Freemasons, but has nothing whatever Masonic in its ritual, unless in a spiritual sense, and has no claim to be a Masonic order, as it is well known the ancient Knights of the Temple were not Masons, as we accept the term." William James Hughan was a well-known Masonic scholar of the 19th century.

the 18th century. During the 18th century, British Freemasonry had been inventing its own traditions (through new rituals and myths), and while these primarily served the purposes of the Craft, they often included a subtext which fostered loyalty to the monarch. Freemasonry also supported a royalist cult by placing British royals at the head of the Craft in England, which also made them, in effect, the "high priests" of imperial Freemasonry. The participation of King William of Orange in Freemasonry began this process, and later the Hanoverian princes in the Craft cemented the relationship between the British monarchy and the "Royal Craft"—a relationship which lasted for the entire period of Raj.[49] This royal connection with Freemasonry was driven home by regular pieces in the *Masonic Record of Western India*.[50]

Freemasonry, while expressing universal brotherhood and universality in general, urges on its members loyalty to their respective countries. For Britons in India, though, the state was officially a trading company until 1858. Furthermore, that company was

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[49] For example, see J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, 208: "The ostentatious loyalty of English freemasonry was guaranteed by the succession of three princes of the blood royal to the Grand Mastership between 1782 and 1813, the Duke of Cumberland, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Sussex...." To some extent this is paralleled by royal involvement in various guilds in the City of London. For example, "the fishmongers had members of the Royal Family in senior positions within the company, either as Prime Wardens or Masters. The present Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, is a Past Prime Warden, and still a member of the Court of Assistants of the company."—Edward (Duke of) Wessex, *The City: Heart of the Empire*, "Crown and Country" series, KQED TV, San Francisco, Nov. 19, 2000. However, Freemasonry, while perhaps sharing with the livery companies royal membership for purposes of protecting guild interests, was vastly different from them, for it had a strong mystical aspect which drew within its ranks members from throughout the world, and was unconnected with actual masons and their guilds.

[50] See, for example, "Freemasonry," in *The Graphic*; reprinted in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 11 (February 1875): 409-10— "Our William III. was a Mason, initiated in 1690. In later times we have George IV., a "good" Mason, as well as Grand Worshipful Master of the Order. Under his auspices the Prince of Wales Lodge (No. 259) was founded, and his brothers, the Dukes of York, Cumberland (King of Hanover), Clarence (William IV.), Kent (father of her present Majesty), and Sussex (Grand Master for thirty years), and Prince William of Gloucester were all illustrious and distinguished craftsmen. At the present time it is hardly necessary to remind our readers that the Prince of Wales and the Dukes of Edinburgh and Connaught are Masons." Alfred Ernest Albert, Duke of Edinburgh (b. 1844), was Victoria's second son, and Arthur William Patrick, Duke Connaught and Strathearn (b. 1850), was her third. See also "The Prince of Wales a Freemason," in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 12 (March 1869): 457. See also *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 85—"Ever since the present dynasty of Hanover has occupied the Throne of England the members of the Royal Family have always been patrons of the Order, and the list has included the Duke of Cumberland, the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.), the Duke of York, the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.), the Duke of Kent (father of her Majesty the Queen), Prince William of Gloucester, and more especially the late Duke of Sussex, who for 25 years filled the office of Grand Master."

nominally acting under the authority of the Mughal emperor. That is why the British could not confer British-style titles and honors on Indians prior to 1858 (except in Bombay, which was officially not under Mughal authority), for such awards also directed loyalty to the British monarch. Yet, for Masonry to have directed its members' loyalty to the Mughal emperor would have been absurd and intolerable—after all, the emperor was the antithesis of the type of progressive ruler that Masonry throughout the world cherished. Likewise to urge its members to be loyal to the East India Company would have been awkward at best. So, British Masons in India focused their loyalty on the British monarch. It was, from an early period (see the letter from Masons of Bengal to the future George IV above), perhaps the only private institution in India which did promote this loyalty.

IV. MASONIC AND IMPERIAL HONORS AND TITLES

During the Victorian and Edwardian eras, according to Paul Rich, Freemasonry "offered the inducement of awards that were outside the state honours system but equally coveted. Extravagant titles were its stock in trade."[51] The Earl of Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary in the 1870s, hinted at this when he claimed in 1875: "Freemasonry possesses many titles to respect even in the eyes of the outer world."[52] This was equally true of rituals, for the "Empire, the [public] schools and the [Masonic] lodges were industriously occupied with *creating* rituals."[53] Indeed, the "old [school] boy freemason

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[51] Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 83. Freemasonry could also be "an alternative honor system which shortcircuited conventional hierarchies. The Masonic baubles which could be acquired to join those on the brimming chestfulls of stars and medals that adorned colonial mandarins were an inducement which is unappreciated"—Paul Rich, "Kim and the Magic House," 331-32.

[52] Earl of Carnarvon addressing the Prince of Wales on the occasion of the latter's installation of Grand Master, April 28, 1875—*MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 87.

[53] Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 87 (italics in original). While the 19th century was indeed a period of heightened activity in creating new side orders in Freemasonry, the latter half of the 18th century experienced a similar efflorescence of new orders. Rich may not be aware, therefore, that the production of new orders in Freemasonry actually preceded Victorian and Edwardian invented tradition, and may have contributed to it through its emphasis on medievalism.

was the archetype of the Imperial ritualist."[54] In their invention of tradition, public schools and lodges "went to considerable pains to give the impression that they were *conserving* rituals, not making them up. Ingenious apologetics enabled the innovations to appear as time-honoured traditions."[55] Sometimes, though, traditions were invented which *were* professedly new. One of these was the "Brotherhood of the Olive Branch of the East," which was Masonic but which also served the needs of imperial unity.

A. The "Brotherhood of the Olive Branch of the East":

Both prior to and after the Mutiny, the British conferred Indian-style honors and titles on Indians, but there was a weakness in this as far as consolidating British rule was concerned, especially after the Mutiny: they harked back to and evoked a memory of pre-British, indigenous sources of imperial power. While they may have been dispensed by the British in their role as agents and protectors of the Mughal emperor, such honors necessarily lacked the symbolic ability to engender loyalty to the new British order.[56] After the psychological blow of the Mutiny, British administrators desperately sought to win the hearts and minds of Indians to British rule. One important way was through British-style titles and honors. However, long before this, the Freemasons, who were not hamstrung by the anomalous political relationship of the East India Company to the Mughal Emperor, were attempting to create their own Masonic "chivalric" orders in order to include Indians in a grand civilizing mission.

On June 24, 1845, James Burnes, the Provincial Grand Master of Western India (Scottish Constitution), before an audience of more than eighty Masons in Bombay, created "a very great sensation" when he proposed the creation of a new knightly order: the "Brotherhood of the Olive Branch in the East." Its objects were to "give a fresh

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[54] Ibid., 94.

[55] Ibid. (italics in original).

[56] See Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, 171: "The British crown was not the crown of India; the British in India were subjects of their own kings, but the Indians were not. The Mughal continued to be the 'fountain of honour' for Indians. The English could not be incorporated through symbolic acts to a foreign ruler, and perhaps more importantly they could not incorporate Indians into their rulership through symbolic means."

impulse to truth, charity, and enlightenment, by increased spread of Masonic principles and practice, and to supply natives of the East, who are Masons, a substitute for the higher chivalric degrees, their exclusion from which creates heartburning."[57] Burnes was referring to the fact that the Knights Templar, a popular "higher-degree" chivalric body existing under the Masonic umbrella was restricted to Christians, for he said:

> Masonic Templary and the other high and chivalric degrees, as they are called, are, I need scarcely, say, unsuited for India; and although in reality they possess no antiquity, being a *cumbrous* invention of the last century engrafted on a naturally pure and simple institution, they are already out of date. With them, therefore, we can do nothing, even if we were capable of attempting to resuscitate, at Bombay, institutions repugnant to the feelings and insulting to the name, of the natives of Asia. I possess legitimately the privilege of communicating many of the high continental Masonic degrees, but I have never exercised it; and when powers were recently transmitted to me to establish a branch of a chivalric order at this place, my reply was, *that I was indisposed generally to encourage grades into which the natives could not be admitted.* But from a new and vigorous institution, such as the Brotherhood I have suggested, suited to the times and circumstances in which we live, stupendous results to society might be anticipated; while to its members, it might be made to possess those charms so fascinating to many in the high degrees, with the incalculable advantage of being open... to native gentlemen, thereby putting an end to the heart-burning which must naturally, and does actually, exist at their exclusion from these degrees.[58]

Strangely, the number of Indian Masons who could have felt such "heart-burning" were a mere handful in 1845—perhaps no more than ten[59]—and hence not much of a constituency for the inauguration of a new chivalric order to include non-Christians. This suggests that Burnes, more than the few Indian Masons at the time, felt the "heart-

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[57] *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (Sept.-Dec., 1845), 2nd (new) series (London): 378.

[58] Ibid.: 379 (my italics). Note that Burnes calls the Knights Templar an "invention" (and a "cumbrous" one!) of the 18th century, thus rejecting its claim to derive from the medieval Templars. This statement,as well as the idea for the new order, demonstrate that Masons could self-consciously engage in inventing traditions. Yet, conscious that some might accuse the proposed order of lacking legitimacy in tradition, later in his speech Burnes asks: "But with all due respect for constituted authorities,... I would ask what patent or writ have the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland, or Ireland, the Grand Orient, or the Supreme Council of the 33 Degrees in France, and all the other great Masonic associations in both hemispheres, but their own authority? And what patent or writ had the Templars of old? the Knights of Jerusalem? and other great chivalric orders of the middle ages?" This was bold talk for a Mason!

[59] See *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (June-Sept., 1845), 2nd (new) series (London): 275: "The [Rising] 'Star' is now composed of ten native members [one of whom soon returned to Sind to work under Charles Napier],... and thirty-eight European members; of whom, five are honorary."

burning" of the Knights Templar excluding non-Christians. Speaking of the Templars of the Crusades, he declares: "*Their* bond of union was war and hatred to the nations of the East—why then should not *we*, the children of a happier age, combine to wipe out the injustice they committed, by proclaiming light and truth, carrying with us the Olive Branch—Let us be the Brotherhood of the Olive Branch—throughout the East."[60]

Burnes also argues for the central role of Bombay in carrying out this civilizing mission:

> I know that if the standard of such a Brotherhood be raised, hundred of Masons throughout India and Europe will seek to be enrolled under it, and I do not despair of seeing Bombay, as from its position—on the horizon, as it were between light and darkness, it is well suited to be... the centre of a movement which for purposes of charity and enlightenment, may influence the remotest corners of the earth.[61]

In the virtues which Burnes outlines—"charity," "enlightenment," etc.—he is anticipating the bases of the new wave of chivalric orders and invented tradition which reached their high-point in Europe and the British Empire later in the century (the British in India began this process with the creation of the "Star of India" in 1861). 19th-century medievalism was, in many ways, a romanticization of progressive values: by the 1870s the honors and titles conferred on non-aristocratic Indians, for example, "were closely tied to the expressed goals of the new governmental order, 'progress with stability.'"[62] Even aristocratic Indians were induced, through such titles and honors, to demonstrate such "civic virtues". For example, the "Maharajah of Jeypore's salute has been raised by

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[60] Ibid. (my italics). This must have been one of the first declarations by a Westerner in modern times of the injustice of the Crusades. To understand how ahead of his times Burnes was, one need only consider that it was over a century and a half later, in March 2000, that Pope John Paul II apologized on behalf of the Church for injuries done by Christians to non-Christians, particularly during the medieval period.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," 181. In the Bombay Presidency—perhaps because of the government's wariness of the rulers of princely states under their jurisdiction, and because of a greater dependence on the merchant princes of Bombay (whose business acumen and liberality had helped to develop the Presidency) and a heavy reliance on a professional class of Western-educated Indians who served in government positions (both in the Law courts and on the Municipal and Legislative Councils)—non-aristocratic Indians got the lion's share of the titles and honors dispensed to Indians by the British government (on the recommendations of Bombay administrators).

two guns for his promptness in remitting all imposts on grain during the dearth in the end of last year."[63] Nevertheless, there was always an aspect of these titles and honors which stressed loyalty to the British monarch—the fount of all such honors—and in 1896 Queen Victoria even founded an order, the "Royal Victorian Order," to "reward personal services rendered the monarch."[64] Conferment of this honor was solely at the discretion of the monarch and there was no limit on the number of members of the order.

Although the order of "Brotherhood of the Olive Branch in the East" had twenty-four promoters—including the Senior Magistrate of Police in Bombay and the Acting Superintendent of the Indian Navy[65]—nothing seems to have come of it. In later years, by contrast, the popularity of the Knights Templar increased among European Masons, if their activities as reported in the *Masonic Record* in the 1860s and 70s are any indication. Was Templary more popular among Europeans than something like the "Olive Branch" precisely because of its exclusivity? Or was it due to the fact that the Knights Templar were well-established, larger, and internationally respected? Or a bit of both? Even if the vision of imperial brotherhood subscribed to by men like James Burnes remained a minority view, it must be conceded that Burnes was far-sighted enough to marry the "invention of tradition" to the notion of an imperial civilizing mission as early as the 1840s, about two decades before his "profane" counterparts in the imperial administration.

B. The "Star of India":

The "Most Exalted Order of the Star of India," established in 1861 as a knightly order of the British Empire (it is just below the Order of the Bath in precedence), had its analogs in imperial Freemasonry. For example, in 1865, J.J. Farnham, the editor of the short-lived *Indian Journal of Freemasonry* (Bombay) became the first Master of Lodge

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[63] "General Intelligence" for April 1869; *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 2 (May 1869): 61.

[64] "Royal Victorian Order," in *Encyclopedia Britannica Online* <http://www.eb.com:180/bol/topic?eu=65954&sctn=1> [Accessed December 20, 1999]. Edward VIII, during his short reign (1936), admitted women into the order.

[65] See *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (June-Sept., 1845), 2nd (new) series (London): 378.

Star of India, No. 1062, E.C. Although Masons often used the word "star" in naming lodges (*Rising Star of Western India*, *Eastern Star*, etc.), giving a lodge the same name as that of the foremost knightly order in the Indian Empire may not have been mere coincidence. In London, too, Lord Ampthill, the Pro-Grand Master of England, consecrated another Lodge *Star of India*, No. 3444, E.C. in 1910 to "'encourage the fraternal spirit of the Craft and to provide a meeting place for the Brethren of Lodges in this country [i.e., India] when they are in England on leave or on retirement.'"[66] The lodge had sixty founders—a large number—including the District Grand Masters of Bengal, Bombay, the Panjab, and Ceylon, and the Past D.G.M.s of Madras and Bombay. The latter group included Sir Lawrence Jenkins, who had previously been the Chief Justice of Bombay, then was appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State for India in London (the India Council) in 1908,[67] and then returned to India, where he became District Grand Master for Bengal.[68] The parallel between Freemasonic lodges and imperial knightly orders is further confirmed by the fact that Lodge *Star of India* "awarded its members a breast jewel resembling the Order of the Star of India."[69] Considering their positions in the administration of the Raj, many of the members of this lodge would also have been honored by the *imperial* order of the Star of India.

Indeed, there was a large area of overlap between high imperial office and honors and high Masonic office and honors. For example, Lord Ampthill, Grand Commander of the Star of India (G.C.S.I.), Grand Commander of the Indian Empire (G.C.I.E.), Governor of Madras, and the Acting Governor-General and Viceroy from April to December 1904,[70] in the Masonic world was the District Grand Master of Madras (E.C.) at the turn

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[66] George O.W. Dunn, D.G.M., speaking in 1910; quoted in K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* (Bombay: n.p., n.d.), 42.

[67] This means that he would have been consulting with Secretary of State Morley during the finalization of the Morley-Minto reforms (1909).

[68] See K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 41, 43.

[69] Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 87. Source for Rich: *Star of India Lodge, No. 3444, A Review from the Consecration to the Fiftieth Anniversary*.

[70] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 806. The British created two new orders of knighthood in India: the Most Exalted Order of

of the century before becoming Pro-Grand Master in England.[71] As Lord Mayo was Grand Master of the Order of the Star of India, so also was he "Lord Patron" of English Freemasonry in India[72] (there was no office of Masonic Grand Master for him to occupy in India; plus, he belonged to the Irish Constitution). Imperial officials and servants thus often did double duty as Masonic officers, and advancement through the ranks of the British Empire seems to have paralleled one's rise through the ranks of imperial Freemasonry.[73] This should not be surprising when we consider that the British royal family constituted the summit of both the imperial and Masonic hierarchies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Freemasonry was thus the chief organized ritual order promoting British civil religion, which had at its center the institution of the monarchy.

Also, as Grand Master of Britain's *cultus imperialis*, Edward was not only the future King-Emperor of the British Empire, but for all intents and purposes its *pontifex maximus*. Other family members, most notably his brothers, Prince Arthur (1850-1942)—the Duke of Connaught—and Prince Leopold (1853-1884)—the Duke of

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the Star of India (1861), and the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire (1878). The Sovereign of both orders was the British monarch (as with all knightly orders), and the Grand Master of the two orders was the presiding Viceroy of India.

[71] See the dedication to Lord Ampthill listing his Masonic and "profane" offices in Alexander Greenlaw, *Masonic Lectures Delivered in Open Lodge, Chapter, etc.* (reprint). Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1905 (orig. publ. Madras, 1870). The reprint also carries the original 1870 dedication to Lord Mayo, "whose name has for many years been associated with Freemasonry, in Great Britain," as "Lord Patron" of the Craft in the East. See also Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 82: "The Old Westminster's Lodge [in London] included the Deputy Grand Master for India's masonic province of Madras, Sir Archibald Campbell." "Campbell... was Member of the Board of Revenue.... and... became Chief Secretary of the Madras Government (1925-30) while he was serving as Deputy Grand Master." "Another Old Westminster became Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge, Sir Arthur Knapp. At the same time... he was Member and Vice President of the Executive Council for Madras."

[72] Prosonno Coomar Dutt, *The Bengal Freemason's Almanac and Diary* (Calcutta: n.p., 1884), 77.

[73] See Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 82, who goes so far as to assert: "Imperial leaders climbed the masonic and government ladders at the same time." It would be fascinating to learned if one's climb up the imperial ladder was ever dependent on affiliation to the Craft, but unless some memoirs of imperial officials reveal this, this question must forever remain unanswered. It is not uncommon, however, for non-Masons to believe that climbing the corporate or state ladder requires such affiliation. I recall being told be a tourist guide in Mexico City that in order to be President, one *had* to be a Mason. And a close family friend who worked for many years in a California public utility company said he knew co-workers who memorized the Masonic ritual while at work, because they were assured by managers that advancement in Freemasonry ensured promotion in the company. If there is any truth in such claims, it is conceivable that something similar might have happened in the Raj, at least in the Presidencies, if not the Government of India itself. The above-suggested overlap between imperial and Masonic office is intriguing, however.

Albany—were also part of this "hierophantic" system: in 1877, they were invested as Senior and Junior Warden of the Grand Lodge of England, respectively, and in 1885 Prince Albert Victor (1864-92)—the Duke of Clarence and Avondale—was initiated as a Mason by his father, the Prince of Wales.[74] As with the Tudors, the Hanoverians had made themselves the heads of both state and religion. Only now, the state was an imperial one and the "religion" it needed to unify its domain was not the Church of England, but the more inclusive one of Freemasonry.

V. FREEMASONRY AND ROMANTIC IMPERIALISM

A. Masonic Antiquarianism and Imperial Politics:

Speculation on the origin of the Craft led to a fascination among Masons with the "mysteries"—whether ancient, or Eastern, or both—and sometimes the search for an *ur* religion (what one Masonic scholar called the "Proto-Evangelium" or "Root Doctrine"[75]) underpinning the religions of all humanity and linking together the races of the world in one vast brotherhood[76] (see Chapter 4) Even at the installation of the Prince of Wales as Grand Master, the Earl of Carnarvon, spoke about the great antiquity of Freemasonry ("an antiquity ascending into the sphere of immemorial tradition") and said that it was "known and practised in every country,..."[77] This is a romantic project pure and simple, and few movements have been as romantic as Freemasonry.[78] The political implications for the Raj of Freemasonry as an *ur*-religion were clear to Masons who were imperialists.

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[74] A.E. Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, vol. 2, 86-87.

[75] See W.L. Wilmshurst, *The Meaning of Masonry*, 5th ed. (New York: Gramercy Books, 1980; 1927), 172. According to the "Anthropological School," Freemasonry was either an evolution out of these earlier systems, and contained the universal truths underlying all religions, or Freemasonry and modern primitive systems (along with ancient mystery religions) shared a common origin in some proto-religion, with Freemasonry having "progressed and risen in scale and the latter having degenerated"—J. Mason Allan, "Towards the Sources of Freemasonry," pp. 88-106, *Grand Lodge of Scotland Yearbook* (1956): 93.

[76] See oration delivered by W.M. Scharlieb, Deputy District Grand Master, Madras, at the consecration of Lodge *Bangalore*, No. 1043 (E.C.), in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 7 (October 1869): 269(my italics).

[77] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 87.

[78] "Romantic" here denotes being "marked by the imaginative or emotional appeal of what is heroic, adventurous, remote, mysterious, or idealized." See "Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary" (online). <http://www.m-w.com> [Accessed May 16, 2000].

B. Sir Charles Napier:

For example, Charles Napier (1782-1853), conqueror and first governor of Sind, provides one of the earliest examples of the attempt to use Masonic antiquarianism to foster attachment and loyalty to the imperial state among the native population. After laying the corner-stone for Masonic hall in Sindh in September 1845, Napier recounted to the audience the history of Masonry "from the earliest times,"[79] in which he claimed that Masonry was "coeval with creation," and that it could be traced "in nearly all parts of the globe." This was standard Masonic antiquarianism. But, then, referring to the Druze, whose "rites and ceremonies were believed to be Masonic," Napier declared that a Brahmin from India had traveled to Lebanon and been "admitted to a knowledge of their mysteries"![80] This was a version of Masonic history which Napier's audience surely had not heard before,[81] but it served to connect India in ancient times—and thus Hindus in Napier's time—with the Masonic Order. The significance of Freemasonry for British imperialism was explicitly revealed by Napier in a letter to the Masons of Limerick in 1848: "we built and established a Masonic Lodge in Scinde, and there found many natives who were, I believe, initiated into the mysteries of the Craft previous to the arrival of our countrymen among them: *and thus was an additional bond of union established.*"[82] Such "discoveries" of primordial Masonry in other parts of the region were common, and in fact were made all over the empire, and beyond.seem to have been common among

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[79] From the *Kurrachee Advertiser*; reprinted in *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (fourth quarter issue: December 1845-March 1846), 2nd (new) series (London): 501—"Many ladies were present in carriages and in horseback, as well as a large number of gentlemen equestrians, and a great body of spectators."

[80] Ibid.: 501-02 (my italics).

[81] This is an antiquarian myth which I have not encountered in my own researches, and one cannot escape the possibility that Napier concocted it himself, although other Masonic scholars had already found alternate ways to connect primitive Freemasonry with Brahmanism.

[82] Charles Napier to the *Union* Lodge of Limerick, 1848; quoted in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 8 (November 1867): 300 (my italics). Napier does not expand on this curious statement—for which omission he should have confessed, "*peccavi*"! Recall, too, Rustomjee Bathurjee's almost identical sentiments in 1867 regarding Freemasonry's ability to "unite the governing and the governed in a bond of brotherhood and friendship" (see Chapter 2; also in minutes of Lodge *Rising Star* for Dec. 20, 1867, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 10 (January 1868): 387).

Masons. James Burnes, for example, mentioned that readers of his brother Alexander's book on the latter's trip to Bokhara "'will recognize something very like Masonry in his meetings with certain Mahomedan Chiefs.'"[83] And Alexander himself had begun to see Muslim society in Afghanistan and Central Asia in terms of Freemasonry.[84]

The antiquarianism in Napier's letter and his address at the stone-laying ceremony posits a common, ancient, and quasi-religious base on which union between the conquered and conqueror might be established.[85] In other words: "In ancient times we were all united through the 'mystic tie' of Freemasonry; now we should live together under one political system, with Masonry as its civil religion."[86] This is precisely the argument put forward by Dravot and Carnehan to the Kafiris in Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King,"[87] only he sought to exploit the idea for self-aggrandizement, rather than

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[83] James Burnes (under the pseudonym, "A Past Master"), letter to the editor, *Bombay Gazette*, January 27, 1840; quoted in A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., 1928), 16.

[84] "A Mahommedan... is at home everywhere his creed is professed, for there is a sort of fellowship in that religion, like freemasonry, which binds its members together; among them there are no distinctions of grade or rank, which so strongly mark the society of other sects and countries"—Alexander Burnes, *Travels to Bokhara; Being an Account of a Journey From India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia; also, Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus, From the Sea to Lahore, With Presents From the King of Great Britain; Performed Under the Orders of the Supreme Government of India, in the Years 1831, 1832, and 1833*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1834), 103.

[85] India was by no means the only place where this was done in the British Empire. See, for example, a letter from "Thales," dated August 10, 1865, to the editor (J.J. Farnham) of the *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 8 (November 1865): 143-44. "Thales" culls an extract from the diary of Mr. McDouall Stuart, printed in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, in which Stuart encounters three Australian Aboriginals in a part of the Outback "previously untrodden in all probability by the foot of any white man." Stuart's diary in the *JRGS* reads: "'I have endeavoured to get information from him [i.e., the lead Aboriginal] were the next water is by signs, and so on; but I cannot understand him, nor I suppose he me. After talking to him sometime, and his talking to his two sons, he turned round and surprised me by giving one of the masonic signs.... I then returned it, which seemed to please them much'" (144).

[86] Napier would also have taken for granted that the ancient wisdom of Freemasonry would be coupled with a notion of a progressive and scientific future in order to usher in an enlightened society. The "profane" *Kurrachee Advertiser*, which reported on the stone-laying ceremony, predicted that the lodge which Napier consecrated would become "a great ornament to the presidency"—*The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (December 1845-March 1846), 2nd (new) series (London): 502. See also W. Burroughs, "The Question 'What One is to Write Upon?' Answered," *Masonic Herald* (Calcutta); reprinted in *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 3 (June 1871): 93—"Ages ago India was a civilized country—decadence followed, darkness overspread, and all was lost; all, however, can yet be restored by bestowing that attention upon it which, for modern improvement, antiquarian researches might develop."

[87] In contrast to the Brahmin who had learned the Craft from the Druze, Kipling suggests that the Kafiris first got Freemasonry from Alexander the Great.

the aggrandizement of imperial rule. The idea is both romantic and compelling. However, we must be careful not to confuse cause and effect. Masonic antiquarianism's search for primitive Freemasonry throughout the world preceded the political uses to which this search could be put when Britain became a world empire.

The printing of the above letter in the *Masonic Record* nineteen years after Napier wrote it demonstrates an on-going fascination with such Masonic "builders of empire" like Napier. So enduring was this fascination, in fact, that in 1909, Lodge *Sir Charles Napier*, No. 1064 (S.C.) was consecrated in Hyderabad, Sind.[88] Only a year earlier, another Scottish Constitution lodge, *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, had been founded in Bombay with the aim of promoting a vision of empire where Indians and Britons participated equally in the imperial project. One lodge's name invoked the old romantic imperialism, centered on conquest; the other looked to the future and a new type of imperialism—equally romantic (because it, too, invoked a fictive ancient brotherhood)—in which the conqueror and conquered were bound by mutual respect.

Freemasonry was romantic, too, because its quest for the mysterious promised excitement and adventure. This paralleled the romantic promise of excitement and adventure which made imperialism appealing in 19th-century Britain. On the eve of the Prince of Wales' visit to India in 1875/76, the *Freemasons' Magazine* of London expanded on the romance of the imperial venture in India:

> It is very characteristic of our Royal Family that they are ever to be found visiting and warmly sympathizing with all the different dependencies of our great empire; and the visit of the Prince of Wales to Hindustan is in itself a very striking event. In that far, yet fascinating land, dear to Englishmen, from the lives and valour of our 'white-faced children,' which, some one has said, 'has been won by English valour and is now preserved by English pluck,' there is hardly a palm grove or a jungle, hardly a hill or a vale, or a winding river which is not endeared to us by the graves and deeds of our own flesh and blood. *Indeed British India constitutes in itself almost a romance.* From the time of the first merchant adventurers until Clive with a handful of men won Plassey, and established our dominion, through the laurels of the great Duke, the victories of Lord Gough and Lord Napier, the

88 A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924*, 216.

> quelling of the great mutiny, Anglo-Indian life is but a recapitulation of all that is devoted and daring, and true in English history.[89]

This was the standard British imperial myth, only now being promulgated by an important British Masonic journal.

C. Rudyard Kipling:

Masonic romantic imperialism was applied by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) to fiction in the late 19th century. As the unofficial poet-laureate of British imperialism, Kipling's contribution to the *Masonic* version of imperialism must be examined, for he was immensely popular in his day and was the first Englishman to win the Noble Prize for literature (1907). Kipling wrote various purely Masonic poems, including "My New Cut Ashlar,"[90] "Banquet Night," "The Palace," and "In the Interests of the Brethren," and a number of his other works are clearly influenced by Freemasonry, as well; for example, the novel, *Kim*, and the short story, "The Man Who Would Be King." Perhaps most expressive of his Masonic romantic imperialism, though, is a poem from the 1890s, "The Mother Lodge,"[91] which depicts a military lodge that, in its diversity, becomes an allegory for Indian imperial unity (see end of chapter).

Besides British members, Kipling's narrator[92] includes as members of his "mother lodge" a Parsi, a Muslim draughtsman, a Sikh, an Oriental Jew, a Gangetic Hindu or Rajput, a Catholic Goan and a Bengali babu, attempting to include as many communities of Indians as possible without stretching one's credulity. The last two are noteworthy,

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89 "Our Royal Grand Master," in *Freemasons' Magazine* (London); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 2 (May 1875): 44 (my italics).

90 An ashlar in regular masonry refers to a large square-cut stone which is rough-hewn. In Freemasonry, it refers to a newly "made" Mason, who is still in a "rough" state and needs further moral shaping and polishing in order to be a "building block" of the Temple.

91 A "mother lodge" is the lodge in which one has been initiated.

92 Moreover, Kipling addresses class diversity among Britons, as well as ethnic diversity. Typical of Kipling's tendency to show military life from the perspective of the common soldier, the narrator is a Cockney, and probably a sergeant, for a Cockney would not have been an officer, and Freemasonry in India does not seem to have accepted anyone lower than a full sergeant into its ranks—see Frank Richards, *Old Soldier Sahib* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1965; 1936), 157: "In theory, I am told, any man of good moral character who believes in a Supreme Deity, and is loyal to the King, and can collect a couple of sponsors and the necessary initiation fee, can become a Mason;.... But in practice I know that in my time it was impossible for anyone under the rank of full-sergeant to become a Mason."

because after Pope Pius IX's Bull against Freemasonry, any Catholic who joined the Craft did so under pain of excommunication if the Church found out. That may be why Kipling stresses the fact with an exclamation mark. As for the Bengali babu, in other works, such as the short story, "The Head of the District," Kipling excoriates Bengali babus. In Kipling's imaginary Lodge, however, things were very different.[93]

Kipling's own non-sectarian religious feelings are reflected in the line, "With Mo'ammed, God, an' Shiva/ Changin' pickets in our 'ead." Interestingly, Kipling does not project this ecumenical impulse onto an elite, educated Briton (the class that would be expected to lean in such a direction), but onto a non-commissioned officer—an "everyman" of empire. As in the Hellenistic world, where a pagan deity in one culture could be compounded with a functionally similar deity from another culture (for example, Venus-Isis-Ishtar) to form the basis of religious syncretism, now, in the British empire, the ambivalence in Masonic circles towards Christianity permitted an acceptance of the truth-claims of other religions. Kipling's hints that Freemasonry could be the bridge across which the religions of empire could communicate and cross-fertilize, and perhaps even that this "bridge" could become a distinct religion in its own right (or something very akin to one—and more inclusive than any of the traditional religions).[94]

D. Freemasonry, Secret Societies, and Espionage:

The spy is quintessentially a romantic figure in popular literature and entertainment. His is a life of adventure and heroism, and he must also deal with mysteries and their decryption.[95] In 1871 W. Burroughs, editor of the *Masonic Herald* in Calcutta, believing that primitive Freemasonry over time had become "spurious in the

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[93] To be fair to Kipling, in *Kim* we find another Bengali babu, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, whose complexity of character betrays a sympathy—or at least ambivalence—on Kipling's part towards the Bengali.

[94] Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*, about Roman Britain (but most likely a metaphor for British India), uses Mithraism (which a number of British Masons believed to be an ancient form of Freemasonry) as a similar "bridge-religion" for the Roman Empire.

[95] A good example of this in modern entertainment is the antiquarian-spy, Indiana Jones.

worship of *Bhowani* in India, as practiced by the *Thugs* or *phasinghurs*, the professional stranglers,"[96] suggested that

> a knowledge of mysteries in a country as India is, in a political point of view we presume, is desirable, and Government might well countenance its study. Almost in every class and creed there are certain marks which are not generally understood but by those who belong to them.... A streak in the garment, a mark on the turban, a cut in the dress, or something peculiar in mode or manner, action or deportment, are indicatives to distinguish a foe from a friend.... If the *chapatee* movement of 1857 had been understood at its first start as it should have been, due knowledge of it would have enabled us to nip much that was bad in the bud.[97]

"Although Masonry has nothing to do with political demonstrations or sectarian discussions," as Burroughs is quick to point out, "yet if its knowledge can be made useful in preventing ebullitions, its study... will not be looked upon in vain.... Forewarned is being forearmed. With such a state of things around us, we can never be too careful...."[98] Burroughs aims to get officialdom to recognize Freemasonry's importance to the maintenance of the Raj through espionage. He believes that because of their expertise in passwords, secret signs, cryptology,[99] and symbolism, Freemasons had the necessary means to evaluate Indian secret societies which might be insurrectionary or otherwise dangerous to British rule. Moreover, Burroughs takes for granted that various of these societies, like the Thugs, shared a common origin with modern Freemasonry. This would surely have shocked many British non-Masons, but the "fact" of a shared geneology with such groups was another proof Masons in the Raj could offer in order to show that they would have an edge up in the job of counter-espionage. It would be fascinating to know

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[96] W. Burroughs, "The Question 'What One is to Write Upon?' Answered," *Masonic Herald* (Calcutta); reprinted in *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 3 (June 1871): 90. Burroughs says that although they are, "as alleged, 'corruptions of the grand primæval tradtion," yet they powerfully attest 'the truth of the Masonic Record....'"

[97] Ibid.: 94.

[98] Ibid.: 91.

[99] It should be noted that the Masons had their own secret alphabet, as well, which allowed them to be incomprehensible to others. For example, in a letter to the *Masonic Record*, William H. Hoff, the editor of the *Indian Freemasons' Friend* in Calcutta, wrote: "It was in the characters of this system that an inscription was found on the walls of the house at Cawnpore in which Nana Sahib confined his victims previous to their massacre...."—"Masonic Cryptography," in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 8 (November 1868): 287.

if Masonic occultic studies were actually used by the internal security apparatus of the Raj. However, we do know that Kipling translated the idea into literature in his novel *Kim* (1901), where Hurree Chunder Mookerjee is the creator of the *Sat Bhai* ("Seven Brothers"—Mookerjee called it "Hindi *and* Tantric" in nature), a super-secret order of Indian spies (although Kim is inducted into it, too) operating under the more conventional espionage department, the "Ethnological Survey."[100] Kipling clearly lifted his *Sat Bhai* from the "Royal Oriental Order of *Sikha* (Apex) and *Sat Bhai*," which was supposedly a Hindu society started by the *pandit* of an Anglo-Indian regiment, and brought to England in 1872 by a British captain, J.H. Lawrence Archer. The order was promoted in Britain in the 1870s by the doyen of "fringe" Masonry at the time, John Yarker, as a "higher-degree" body of Freemasonry.[101] As for the Hindu pundit who created the *Sat Bhai*, this would be fascinating, indeed, if not for the great likelihood that the order was cooked up by J.H. Lawrence-Archer, John Yarker, and Kenneth Mackenzie, the last two being notorious dabblers in occultic, higher-degree Masonic orders. Like Co-Masonry at a later time, this order's rules permitted women as members.

According to the *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia* (1877) by Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie—an important Masonic reference work of its time—the last meeting of the order was held in Allahabad (Prayag) in 1845. In Allahabad, Mackenzie writes, are to be seen

> a subterranean temple, and one of the celebrated columns of Asoka. Numerous ancient sculptured stones are found utilized in the more recent structures, and on these are *irregularly* carved many of the *well-known symbols of Masonry*, dating from an extremely remote period. These have been transmitted through the present order, and attest the fact, if fact it be, that the great architect of Solomon's temple derived much of his mystic lore from the land which, according to Thornton and others, was the cradle of the earliest civilization. The present order, derived from such a source, is especially interesting. It practical uses are also

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[100] Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (New York: Airmont Publishing Co., 1965), 164 (for other editions, see Chapter 10).

[101] See Ellic Howe, "Fringe Masonry in England, 1870-85," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, E.C. (London), vol. 85 (1972): 267. The "Code of the Royal Oriental Order of Sikha (Apex) and Sat Bhai," is printed as Appendix 2 to his paper.

> obvious, and as an institution for developing Masonic archæology, it will probably find many supporters in the lands to which it has immigrated.[102]

Just what were the practical uses of this order? Mackenzie's list reveals a concern for political stability, imperial unity, and Freemasonry as the means to achieve them:

> The principles of the order are Masonic, and include the preservation, in its original Archaic purity, of Craft Masonry; the support of duly constituted authority wherever found; sympathy with all branches of the Aryan race, and the cultivation of a fraternal sentiment, more especially towards the Hindus; and it inculcates the study of Hindu literature and archæology.[103]

(To return to Kipling for a moment, the fictional Hurree Chunder Mookerjee's secret order of the same name shares with the real *Sat Bhai* the aim of supporting legitimate—i.e., British—rule.)

What looks like the old Orientalist school of British rule in India never died as a movement (as many historians tend to imagine), but remained alive and well—indeed, thrived—as a project of imperial Freemasonry. However, to the old Orientalist discipline of the "study of Hindu literature and archæology" is added mystico-racial component which acknowledges both a "spiritual" fraternal bond between Europeans and Hindus through ancient Freemasonry, and also a common racial tie—a tie which demands of European Aryan Masons that they demonstrate brotherly affection towards Hindu Aryans and study their civilization. Although, at first glance, Aryan racial theory may appear at odds with Freemasonry's universalism, if looked at structurally, race is being used to include, not exclude, a group of people whom Europeans in the late 19th century tended to view as the "other." Freemasons used Aryanism to "brother" the "other." This approach towards Indians represented a countervailing force to the dominant discourse among Britons in late 19th-century India that "India's barbarism and heathenism required

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[102] Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie, ed., *The Royal Masonic Cyclopædia of History, Rites, Symbolism, and Biography* (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1877), 650 (italics in original). Interestingly, immediately preceding the preface to the book is an engraving of a female statue garbed in mostly Mesopotamian-style garb, yet titled "The Hindu Isis."

[103] Ibid.

and rationalized their autocratic presence."[104] Such sentiments of brotherhood, by contrast, accorded well with those of the Liberal and sometime Prime Minister, W.E. Gladstone (1809-97),[105] for whom empire was a trust, and who believed that Britain should have "'no interest in India except the well-being of the land itself.'"[106] This is not to say that Gladstone was against having a British Empire, for he wrote: "While we are opposed to imperialism,… we are devoted to empire.'"[107] Nevertheless, Gladstone seems to have looked forward to an imperial polity of independent states held together by ties of affection and friendship.

Although Mackenzie says that the order is "now firmly established in England and Scotland, and has branches in America, Austria, and other countries," there is little evidence that it grew very large at all. Nevertheless, the ideas it promoted—of respect for Hindu civilization; the legitimation of British rule in India (interestingly, the book was published within a year of Victoria's assumption of the title of "Empress of India"); and the conception of a British Indian Empire, characterized not by British racial superiority, but by a fraternity of Hindus and Europeans tied together by race and Freemasonry—these ideas have a long development stretching back to the 18th century and promoted, if not always conceived, by Freemasons. They also represent the hybridization in culture and thought which empire often gives rise to in all ages. The imperial metropole was now absorbing religious currents from those it had conquered, albeit in forms that had been altered to suit Western Masonic sensibilities.

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[104] Ann Parry, *The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling: Rousing the Nation* (Buckingham; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1992), 9.
[105] William Ewart Gladstone served as prime minister four times (1868–74, 1880–85, 1886, and 1892–94)
[106] Quoted in Ann Parry, *The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling*, 8. Taken from W.E. Gladstone, "Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East," *The Nineteenth Century*, 11, August 1877, 149-66.
[107] Ibid.

VI. MASONIC PAGEANTRY AND IMPERIAL RULE

According to the sociologist Robert Bellah, state rituals are a key area for studying civil religion at work. Since we have already noted how Freemasonry became the chief private organization promoting British civil religion, we would expect Masonic pageantry and ritual to serve the needs of the British imperial state, as well.

The revival of royal pageantry in the late 19th century, beginning with Queen Victoria's assumption of the title of "Empress of India" in 1877, was preceded by a parallel move towards even greater grandeur in pageantry among English aristocrats and royals who were Masons, and one is compelled to wonder if Freemasonry's own highly choreographed pageantry did not provide a template for the new royal pageantry. Certainly, many of the players would have been the same, and the training in ritual and pageantry acquired in the lodge could easily be applied to the performance of state rituals.[108] According to Peter Merrington, speaking of the Union of South Africa pageant in 1910, Masonic pageantry not only expressed loyalty to the empire but also promoted the idea of social progress and other Enlightenment values: "Masonry contributed directly to the stock of civic and state iconography and ceremonial of the period. The myths that underlie Masonic ritual corresponded to narratives of spiritual, historical, and social evolution that supported the rationale of the greater imperial project from the 1870s to the 1930s."[109]

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[108] According to Paul Rich, "Freemasonry seems to impart to its members an authority and self-confidence in matters of ritual and symbolism, whether deserved or not"—Paul Rich, "Kim and the Magic House," 336n.

[109] Peter Merrinton, "Masques, Monuments, and Masons: the 1910 Pageant of the Union of South Africa," in *Theatre Journal*, vol. 49, no. 1 (1997): 5. Merrington also believes that these Masonic ritual motifs echoed "those in G.W. Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, which—with its geographical and evolutionary argument—fed western national and imperial thought in the nineteenth century." Yet, Masons just as often looked to the East for extant forms of pristine Masonry in a way which suggested that, in moving from East

In 1870, Lord Ripon, future Viceroy of India, was installed as the Grand Master of England in a ceremony that was "probably the largest ever witnessed in the Craft," attended by over a thousand Masons, including the Prince of Wales.[110] The installation of the Prince of Wales as Grand Master of England on April 28, 1875 was an even grander event. Held at the Albert Hall, it was attended by seven to eight thousand Masons from throughout the empire and the world—perhaps the most influential men on the planet at the time! "Great and glorious, however, as have been the associations and traditions of the past, the scene of magnificence which was... presented on the installation of the Prince of Wales stands out in bold relief and without a parallel in anything that was ever before seen in Freemasonry, and will henceforth form one of the principle 'remarkable occurrences' of the Order."[111] The ceremony lasted for two hours, and was followed by a banquet at the Freemasons' Tavern. The Bombay District Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India were both represented by various Masons, including one Indian, Pestonjee Bazonjee of Lodge *Eastern Star*.[112]

One can imagine the impact of such pageantry on the participants and the audience (most of whom, as Masons, would have been co-dramaturgists). Occasions like these make it hard to distinguish between the state and the Craft, for foreign Masonic dignitaries who attended the events were often statesmen in their own countries.[113] And there would, of course, have been a heightened sense of the connection between the lodge

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to West, Masonry had suffered a loss rather than evolved. For example, the Masonic scholar J.S.M. Ward believed that the Higher Degree Masonic sign language "is still almost intact in India, but in Europe it has to a certain extent become broken up"—J.S.M. Ward, *An Outline of Freemasonry* (London: The Baskerville Press, 1924), 80.

[110] *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 4 (July 1870): 141.

[111] "Installation of the Prince of Wales as Grand Master," in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 85. The Prince entered the hall to the sounds of a processional march composed by the celebrated conductor, Sir Michael Costa (1810-84). See also 88-88a: "The whole of the floral decorations at the Albert Hall were supplied by Bro. J. Wills, of the Royal Exotic Nursery," who was "ably assisted... by Bro. A.F. Barron, superintendent of the Royal Horticultural Gardens at South Kensington and Cheswick." The floral decorations included a canopy of palm trees!

[112] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 81.

[113] For example, at the installation of the Prince of Wales, something akin to diplomatic relations was at work: "'the King of Sweden and Norway,' said the Prince of Wales, 'has been especially pleased to send over five distinguished brethren to take part in my installation'"—*MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 88b.

and the state when Masonic ceremonies involved members of the royal family, as on this occasion, or when the Dukes of Connaught and Albany were raised to the thirty-third degree in a higher-grade Masonic body in London's Masonic Hall on November 6, 1878.[114]

Did the increased grandeur of Masonic ritual and pageantry inspire the development in imperial pageantry a few years later, thus helping to kick off the ceremonial side of the "revival of imperialism" in the 1870s? Looking at the grandeur of Ripon's and the Prince of Wale's installation ceremonies, Freemasonry's highly choreographed mass pageantry seems to have provided a template for the mass pageantry of the British Empire (if we use Lytton's 1877 *darbar* as a starting point), when "'archaic traditions of the Middle Ages were enlarged in their scope so as to include the modern splendour of a mighty empire.'"[115] Yet, long before the the imperial "high pageantry" of the 1870s and later, Masonic ritualism and pageantry been attempting to inspire in spectators both loyalty to the throne and support of the British Raj.

A. Masonic Stone-layings and Imperialism in India:

When historians consider the pageantry of the Raj, they usually focus on the occasional *darbars* staged by viceroys or governors. However, long before such events and much more frequently, Freemasonry had been putting its public ceremonial at the service of the Raj—through foundation-stone-laying rituals. It is hard to imagine today the ubiquity of Masonic public pageantry in the British Raj, for most historians have utterly neglected it when dealing with imperial ceremonial. Yet "Freemasonry was an important part of Victorian India,"[116] and when government buildings or important

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[114] See *MRWI*, vol. 20, no. 8 (November, 1883): 289. And, to drive home the point that the royal connection with Masonry was not new, the Earl of Carnarvon, addressing the Prince of Wales on the occasion of the latter's installation as Grand Master, stated: "Your Royal Highness is not the first by many of your illustrious family that have sat in that chair"—quoted in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June, 1875): 87.

[115] David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition' c. 1820-1977," pp. 101-164 in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, 124-25.

[116] Paul Rich, "Kim and the Magic House," 333.

private institutions were to be constructed, it seems to have been assumed that they would more often than not consecrated with a Masonic ritual, with its unique brand of non-Christian, quasi-religious symbolism. Hence, perhaps the most visible manifestation of Freemasonry's support for British imperialism in India and elsewhere in the empire was its unique brand of non-Christian, quasi-religious, public pageantry. Bernard Cohn states that the British "experimented with varying forms of ritual to mark public occasions," and includes Masonic ceremonies among them: "Not only is the idiom of the ritual a European one, but so is the institution being celebrated and its underlying public civic ideal." While the civic ideal being promoted was European, in the minds of Masons, at least, they were definitely not employing a fully European ritual idiom. In fact, Masons went out of their way to stress that theirs was an ancient and universal order, not a European one.[117] This was crucial to the British attempt to link Indians first to the Craft, and then to the empire, as Charles Napier had tried to do in Sind through his invocation of Masonic history (see above). Moreover, Masonic pageantry not only expressed loyalty to the empire but also promoted the idea of social progress: "Masonry contributed directly to the stock of civic and state iconography and ceremonial of the period. The myths that underlie Masonic ritual corresponded to narratives of spiritual, historical, and social evolution that supported the rationale of the greater imperial project from the 1870s to the 1930s."[118]

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[117] See ibid.: "British colonial rulers dressed up not only as Knights of the Star of India but as Masonic Princes of Jerusalem, Knights of the Brazen Serpent, and Grand Patriarchs of the Crusades. The fact that many of these rituals made use of exotic Eastern motifs meant that those who belonged were caught up not only in the civil rituals of ruling but in pseudohistorical pageantry incorporating fantasies about the very East they were serving...."

[118] Peter Merrinton, "Masques, Monuments, and Masons," 5. Merrington also believes that these Masonic ritual motifs echoed "those in G.W. Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, which—with its geographical and evolutionary argument—fed western national and imperial thought in the nineteenth century." If this is true, Masons just as often looked to the East for extant forms of pristine Masonry in a way which suggested that, in moving from East to West, Masonry had suffered a loss rather than evolved. For example, the Masonic scholar J.S.M. Ward believed that the Higher Degree Masonic sign language "is still almost intact in India, but in Europe it has to a certain extent become broken up"—J.S.M. Ward, *An Outline of Freemasonry* (London: The Baskerville Press, 1924), 80.

Freemasons and British administrators (often one and the same) usually participated jointly in the stone-laying ceremonies. Frequently, a leading imperial administrator officiated; or, if he was not a Mason, he was prominently positioned as a guest.[119] This both honored the official and allowed the spectators to conclude that the state sympathized with and supported the Craft. These occasions became, moreover, opportunities for Freemasons to propagandize on behalf of the Craft, as when James Burnes, the Provincial Grand Master for Bombay, gave a detailed speech about Freemasonry at the stone-laying ceremony for the Jamshedjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital in Bombay on January 3, 1843—the first of such ceremonies in the Bombay Presidency (see Chapter 2).

The government positions of some of the ritual actors on that occasion show how intertwined state and Freemasonry had become in Bombay by the 1840s:

> Yesterday, the north-east corner-stone of the "Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital" was laid with great pomp and Masonic formality, at Byculla, by the R.W. The Provincial Grand Master of Western India, Dr. James Burnes, K.H., assisted by the Hon. G.W. Anderson, *member of Council*; P.W. LeGeyt, Esq., *Chief Magistrate*; L.R. Reid, and J.P. Willoughby[120] Esquires, *Secretaries to Government*; *Lieutenant-Colonel* Neil Campbell, and W. Crawford, Esq., *Major-General* Valiant, K.H.., and the various other dignitaries of the Masonic Craft at Bombay,—in the presence of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, The Honourable The Governor, Sir Thomas M'Mahon, all the principal members of our Society, and an immense assemblage of every class and denomination.[121]

The Governor of Bombay, Sir George Arthur, was not a Mason—and so was given an honored position as a guest—but his son was and he participated in the ritual. Among the

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[119] James Burnes was quick to point out to Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy and the large audience assembled for the stone-laying ceremony of the Jeejeebhoy Hospital that "if we cannot include amongst us, that distinguished officer who presides at Bombay, we have the satisfaction of seeing his son amongst our office-bearers"—reported in *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, January 4, 1843: 4.

[120] J.P. Willoughby (1798-1866) was Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay. See Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 9: "The Bombay Secretariat was an important repository of expertise in relation to these areas [i.e., the Persian Gulf and the border states along the southern section of British India's western frontier] and this knowledge was deployed to considerable effect by powerful public servants such as Francis Warden and J.P. Willoughby." Willoughby also held office in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India, under James Burnes.

[121] *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, January 4, 1843: 4 (my italics).

Masons mentioned above, George William Anderson had been officiating Governor from April 1841 to June 1842, and Lestock Robert Reid would officiate as Governor from August 1846 to January 1847. LeGeyt served as Senior, or Chief, Magistrate of Police from 1841 to 1846, and W. Crawford would serve in the same position from 1856-59.[122] Neil Campbell was Quartermaster-General of the Bombay Army.[123] So, the government of the Bombay Presidency in this period—both civilian and military—contained Masons from middle-level positions right to the top. And these men felt it important to show their support for, and lend their prestige to, Freemasonry in this large public spectacle that was attended by what the *Bombay* Times called "an immense assemblage of every class and denomination." Stone-laying ceremonies alone would have been sufficient to persuade the mass of imperial subjects in India that Freemasonry was either the cult or religious expression of the imperial state.

Burnes—who was in the East India Company's Medical Department, and who would later play a "prominent part in the medical education of the [Jeejeebhoy] hospital and College"[124]—took the opportunity to weave loyalty to the Crown into his speech at the ceremony, and the inscription on the silver plate that was buried with the foundation stone combined all the elements of imperial consolidation:

> THIS EDIFICE was erected as a testimony of devoted loyalty to THE YOUNG QUEEN OF THE BRITISH ISLES, and of unmingled respect for the just and paternal BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN INDIA; also, in affectionate and patriotic solicitude for the welfare of the poor classes of all races of his countrymen, the British Subjects of Bombay, by SIR JAMSETJEE JEEJEEBHOY, KNIGHT, the first native of India honoured with British Knighthood, who thus hoped to perform a pleasant duty towards his government, his country, and his people and, in solemn remembrance of blessings bestowed, to present this, *his offering of religious gratitude*, to ALMIGHTY GOD, The Father in Heaven of the Christian—the Hindoo—the Mahommedan—and the Parsee, with humble and

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[122] S.R. Kapse, "Police Administration of Bombay City, 1600-1865, A History" (Unpubl. Ph.D. thesis for the University of Bombay, January 1986), 404-05.

[123] A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 2.

[124] Ibid., 206.

earnest prayer for His continued care and blessing upon his Children—his Family—his Tribe—and his Country.[125]

Here, Masonic pageantry and ritual are promoting: loyalty to the crown, obedience to the state, progressive ideals, and an inclusive, latitudinarian religion which can unite all. Because of its mystical brand of antiquarianism, the last element was Freemasonry's unique contribution to binding together Britain's Indian subjects in loyalty to the monarchy and the Raj.[126]

An account of the event written about twenty years later by G.L.F. Connell, the secretary of Lodge *Perseverance*, mentions the "very large gathering of all castes, creeds, and persuasions, as any thing done by Europeans in those days always excited the curiosity of the natives, more especially such a procession, formed by the brethren in their Masonic costume, bearing banners, &c., and a European band preceding them."[127] It seems not to have been coincidental that at the end of that year Lodge *Rising Star of Western India* was founded, largely on the initiative of James Burnes, who wanted to recruit Natives—especially those in government service.[128] This move would have the added effect in years to come of further increasing the number of Masons in Bombay's government.

To demonstrate the abiding nature of Masonic public pageantry and ritual in the life of the Raj one need only jump ahead to September 1906, sixty-three years later, when

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[125] *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, January 4, 1843: 4 (my italics). Note how this Masonic ceremony is considered by the Masons to be a religious offering.

[126] In another example of this, at his installation as District G.M. for the English Constitution in Bombay in 1879, the barrister Tyrrell Leith stated: "'One of the first duties of a Mason is to be a good citizen, for Freemasonry is ever on the side of peace, of order and of legally constituted authority. *Its importance for this country indubitably lies in the fact that it spreads abroad the principles of true toleration and teaches unswerving loyalty to the Crown.* I venture to assert that it is an enormous social, and in the widest sense of the term, *political force, which no statesman can afford either to ignore or despise.* Its great value as an element of strength to the Commonwealth has been fully recognised by some of the foremost civilised nations, for, in Germany, Holland, Sweden, and Denmark, Royalty has placed itself at the head of the Craft, and the Heir-Apparent to the British Throne is our Most Worshipful Grand Master'"—quoted in K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 27 (my italics).

[127] G.L.F. Connell, on Lodge *Perseverance*, No. 351 (S.C.), in "History of Freemasonry in Western India" (serialized), in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 7 (October 1867): 252. *Bhootkhana*, literally "Ghost House," was an indigenous name for a Masonic Hall.

[128] See Minutes of Lodge *St. Andrew's in the East*, No. 343, S.C., for July 30, 1844 (14th Meeting). Courtesy of Mr. Larry Grant, Lodge Secretary.

another Masonic stone-laying ceremony was carried out for the Sir William Moore Operating Theater that was to be built at the Jeejeebhoy Hospital.[129] This time there were over four hundred Masons present from both the English and Scottish Constitutions (in 1843 there were around fifty[130]). Whereas in 1843 the Governor had not been a Mason, now the ceremony was performed by the Governor himself, Lord Lamington, who was also the Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India. In contrast to Burnes' day, when all the participants of the Provincial Grand Lodge were Britons, this time, of the fifty-one officers from the G.L.A.S.F.I. and the District Grand Lodge (E.C.), twenty-nine—or fifty-seven percent—appear to be Indian,[131] of which three appear to be Muslims, two or three, Hindus, and the rest, Parsis, among whom was one of Jamshedji Jijibhai's descendants, P.B. Jijibhai.[132]

A.1. Bengal:

Nor was such Masonic pageantry restricted to the Bombay Presidency. Even earlier than in Bombay, the same substitution of Masonic for imperial ritual had occurred in Bengal. An 1869 article entitled "Masonic Landmarks in Bengal" suffices to demonstrate that this was not an anomaly in Bengal, but standard practice.

> Foundation-stone of the *Calcutta Custom House* laid by the P.G.M. [i.e., Provincial Grand Master] of Bengal [1819]....[133] Foundation-stone of *St. Peter's Church in Calcutta* laid by the P.G.M. 24th July 1822.... At the request of the G.G. Lord Amherst, the Foundation-stone of the *Hindoo College, Calcutta*, was laid by the P.G.M. [25 February 1824],....[134] Foundation-stone of the *Metcalfe Hall, Calcutta*, was laid by the P.G.M. before the Earl of Auckland, G.G. [10 December 1840],.... Foundation-stone of the *Alms House, Calcutta*, laid by the

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[129] William Moore had been the Surgeon-General for the Bombay Government. See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 206.

[130] See *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, January 4, 1843: 4

[131] Only last names are given in full, so it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between certain Indian and British names—especially so, as Indians in Bombay sometimes adopted English names, such as Driver, Merchant, Cooper, Nicholson, etc.

[132] A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 203-06.

[133] Also in Walter K. Firminger and Guy D. Robinson, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times*, 140.

[134] On July 22 of the same year, the foundation-stone for the New Mahommedan College (the "New Madrassa") was also laid by John Larkins, the Provincial Grand Master—see below.

> P.G.M. in the presence of the Lord Bishop of Calcutta [18 December 1841].... Foundation-stone of the *Calcutta Fever Hospital* laid by the P.G.M. before the Earl of Dalhousie [1848].... Foundation-stone of the *Bethune School, for Hindoo females*, laid by Bro. the Honourable Sir L.H. Littler, Deputy-Governor of Bengal, assisted by the Masons [6 November 1851],.... Foundation-stone of the *Howrah Hospital* was laid by Bro. P.W. LeGeyt, P.P.G.M. [i.e., Past Prov. Grand Master] of Western India [1858].... Corner-stone of *European Market* laid by the District Grand Master [5 December 1864].... Corner-stone of the *Dalhousie Institute* laid by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, assisted by the District Grand Master, in the presence of the Viceroy, the Lord Bishop, and other High Functionaries [4 March 1865]....[135]

The foundation stone ceremony for the Hindu College in 1824 was laid by the then-Provincial Grand Master, John Pascal Larkins.[136] On that occasion, "the house tops in every direction" were "crowded to cramming by the natives anxious to have a view of the imposing scene,"[137] and none other "Baboo Ram Mohun Thakoor" (i.e., Ram Mohan Roy) described the "high sense entertained by the native population of the honour done them by the Right Worshipful the [Provincial] Grand Master."[138] In July 22 of the same year, the foundation-stone for the New Mahommedan College (the "New Madrassa") was also laid by Larkins, who stated on that occasion:

> A few months only have elapsed, since my Brethren and myself had the honour of meeting you [i.e., the "Gentlemen of Calcutta and of the Native Community"] for the purpose of laying the foundation stone of a College dedicated to the moral and intellectual improvement of that portion of our native subjects, who are devoted to the Religion of Brahma; and we are now assembled to perform a similar ceremony for the same purposes under the same consideration for the Professors of the Mahommedan Faith.[139]

Larkins lamented that it would have been preferable "to see the great object of instruction in the fundamental principles of Moral and Physical Sciences carried on under one roof without distinction as to religious opinions..." yet he conceded that

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135 "Masonic Landmarks in Bengal," in *Bengal Freemasons' Almanac*; repr. In *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 4 (July 1869): 147-48 (my italics). For the foundation stone ceremony of the Dalhousie Institute in Calcutta in 1864, see also Walter K. Firminger and Guy D. Robinson, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times*, 255-56.

136 Walter K. Firminger and Guy D. Robinson, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times*, 154.

137 Pratap Chandra Chunder, *The Sons of Mystery: A Masonic Miscellany From Old Calcutta*, 150.

138 Ibid., 153. At the end of the ceremony, the band struck up the National Anthem, "God Save the King."

139 Ibid., 158.

> as such a consummation, however devoutly to be desired, cannot, under existing circumstances be expected, you will still rejoice with me in the prospect afforded us of beholding the ready march of instruction among the Native population, and their approach to that state of amelioration to which the efforts now making for their improvement must necessarily lead.[140]

According to Peter Van der Veer: "One of the most powerful arguments used to legitimate colonial rule was that the British were an enlightened race who had a duty to lead and develop the Indian people, steeped in ancient prejudices as they were. An important utilitarian element of this argument was that the British were a secular Christian nation who had a rational interest in a useful morality."[141] Larkin's speech exemplifies these attitudes perfectly. Thus, Freemasonry may be seen as a distinct strand of an ideological complex which also included Utilitarianism and Evangelicalism, and which sought the reformation of Indian society. Given its roots in the 17th century, Freemasonry may have to be regarded as a "first among equals" in this complex.

To get an idea of how Indians who were not Masons interpreted such events, one need look no further than at the Bengali-language *Samachar Darpan* for July 24, 1824, which announced that the foundation stone for the New Madrassa had been laid by "the Europeans belonging to the sect of Masonry," and that after the stone-laying "the religious head of that sect prayed to the All-creating, All-pervading God...."[142] Clearly, such pageantry impressed on the minds of Indian spectators the notion that Freemasonry was a religion, and, given the participants, that this religion was closely associated with the state.

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140 Ibid., 159.

141 Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 21. Van der Veer goes on to argue that the colonial regime "was to play the role of a modern, secular state in a society torn by religious and civil strife, just as it had in seventeenth-century Europe" (ibid.). I would argue that the role of the Masonic lodge in moderating religious strife in seventeenth-century society may have preceeded the role of the state in this area.

142 Pratap Chandra Chunder, *The Sons of Mystery*, 162. Translation by Chunder.

A.2. Royal Craftsmen:

Sometimes, when one was present in India, a member of the British royal family (such as the Duke of Connaught or the Prince of Wales) would take the lead in conducting Masonic rituals. For example, in Bombay the Prince of Wales, as Grand Master of English Masonry, with much pageantry "laid the foundation stone of the Prince's Dock on 11th November 1875 according to Masonic rites and ceremonies."[143]

The Prince's Dock ceremony shows well how Masonic pageantry, civil religion, and imperial consolidation had become a seamless fabric in the minds of most (perhaps all!) British Masons in India. James Gibbs the District Grand Master for Bombay and a Judge of the High Court of Bombay,[144] and Henry Morland, the Grand Master of A.S.F.I.,[145] delivered a public address to the Prince of Wales, declaring on behalf of Bombay's Masons "our firm and indissoluble loyalty and devotion to Her Majesty... and our profound attachment to your Royal person." Such professions of loyalty call to mind the letter of the Bengal Masons to the Prince of Wales eight decades before. Unlike that earlier address, though, Gibbs and Morland stated that Masonry was drawing Indians into the circle of the monarchy's loyal subjects, thus showing its importance to the imperial state:

> The wide extension and material progress of Freemasonry in the Presidency during the past decade, and the welcome accession to your fraternity of an ever increasing number of Lodges entirely supported *by our loyal and enlightened Parsee, Hindoo, and Mahomedan fellow-subjects*, afford just ground for congratulation, and for the belief that this visit of your Royal Highness will give a lasting impulse to the advancement of the Craft in India; *and strengthen, if it be*

[143] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342 S.C.* (Bombay: British India Press, 1912), 195. See also *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 9 (December 1875): 325-34.

[144] See *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 6 (September 1870): 234—James Gibbs was "one of the Judges of H.M.'s High Court of Judicature, Bombay, a Member of the Bombay Civil Service, Barrister-at-Law, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay, &c. &c."

[145] In his "profane" life, Capt. Henry Morland was a member of the Royal Indian Marine, late of the Indian Navy, Master Attendant, and Conservator of the Port of Bombay. He was also a Justice of the Peace and a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society—see A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 88.

> *possible, that unswerving allegiance to and veneration for our Rulers and Patrons which have ever distinguished Freemasonry.*[146]

Unlike the *Freemasons' Magazine* in London, the Masonic leaders of Bombay did not indulge in self-congratulatory references to English "valour" and "pluck" (sect. IV.B). British Masonic leaders "in the field" realized how incongruous this was with the notion of universal brotherhood. It suggests, too, that an attempt was being made back in England to press Freemasonry into the service of not just an imperial project, but of a British nationalistic project, as well (as had happened in many countries).

After Bombay, the Prince of Wales was to carry out a similar Masonic ritual at Madras.[147] Seven years later, in 1882, the Duke of Connaught, the Commander-in-Chief, "accompanied by H.E. the Governor of Bombay, laid the foundation stone of the Pestanji Hormusji Cama Hospital for Women and Children. The ceremony was to be performed according to the ancient masonic rites and with masonic honours," but an accident precluded the performance of the Masonic ceremonies.[148] Such examples prove that these ceremonies were not the exception, *but the rule*, and that the ritual idiom and pageantry for imperial and civic public works projects was provided in the main by Freemasonry. Since the Ruler of English (and Patron of Scottish) Freemasonry was now the Prince of Wales and heir to the throne,[149] and the Patron of English Masonry was his

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[146] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 9 (December 1875): 334 (my italics). The Prince responded: "I have learned with great pleasure the flourishing condition of the Craft in this part of India, and the efficiency with which Lodges annually increasing in number fulfil the objects of the institution by uniting together men of various castes and creeds in the bonds of fraternal brotherhood, by giving them common objects of exertion for extending the knowledge of our ancient Craft and for promoting the good of all mankind. It is a great pleasure to me to join the brethren in Bombay in a work which will tend to the protection of like and property, to the extension of trade, and to add to the prosperity and happiness of large bodies of our fellow men."

[147] See "General Intelligence" for November 1875, in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 9 (December 1875): 358—"Arrangements have been made for laying the Memorial stone of Madras Harbour with Masonic honours, similar to those observed by the Prince at Bombay on the 11th."

[148] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 231.

[149] See "General Intelligence" for July 1875, in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 5 (August 1875): 183—As Disraeli told Parliament on the eve of the Prince's visit to India, "His Royal Highness will not visit India as the representative of the Queen, but as heir-apparent, and will hold an investiture of the Star of India, without however encroaching on the position of the Viceroy. His Royal Highness will be placed in a position to impress the people of India with his real dignity and influence." This would have made the the prince's participation in Freemasonry that much more significant during his trip to India.

mother, Queen Victoria, "unswerving allegiance" to the Masonic rulers and patrons of the British Grand Lodges had now become utterly indistinguishable from allegiance to the British monarch and heir-apparent. Given that Indians non-Masons seem to have seen Freemasonry as a "sect," would they not have concluded on the occasion of such stone-layings that the Prince of Wales and the Duke were also performing their duties as the sect's "high priests"? In retrospect, the decision of the Hanoverian dynasty to associate itself with Freemasonry, regardless of the motivations involved, had clearly served to strengthen the British monarchy, and may partly explain the longevity of this dynasty at a time of unprecedented change in English society. Indeed, for the British monarchy it was, as Daniel Dravot had exclaimed in "The Man Who Would Be King," "a master stroke o' policy," whether wittingly done or not.

Masonic ceremonies, then, were clearly not an experiment in India, as Cohn suggests. They may have been experimental as state rituals in early Hanoverian England, but their very success caused them to be exported with British imperial expansion.[150] Contrary to Cohn, Paul Rich argues that although introduced by the British, "the fraternity had become very much part of India."[151] Not only were these rituals ubiquitous but they were also successful in drawing in Indians as participants. For example, among other Indian Masons, Pherozeshah Mehta, participated in the Prince's Dock ritual as an officer of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India.[152]

Since so many Masons were also imperial administrators, Masons could conversely use imperial pageants as an opportunity to perform important Masonic rituals. For example, during the Delhi Durbar in January 1903, the Duke of Connaught, now Grand Master of England, installed Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief of India, as

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[150] For an analysis of the role played in imperial civic ceremonial by Freemasonry in South Africa, see Peter Merrinton, "Masques, Monuments, and Masons": 5—"Freemasonry was a ubiquitous and massively influential network of male societies across the British Empire from Khartoum to Canada, Tasmania, and the Punjab, in which gendered codes of filial obligation and devotion to duty were ritually rehearsed."

[151] Paul Rich, "Kim and the Magic House," 333.

[152] See A Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 11. Mehta is listed as being the Grand Registrar for the G.L.AS.F.I.

the District Grand Master for Punjab. The Delhi Durbar was attended by around 450 Masons, including the Maharaja of Kapurthala[153] and the Maharaja of Cooch-Behar[154]—both of whom were Past Grand Wardens of the Grand Lodge of England.

VII. FREEMASONRY, "FEUDALS," AND "PROGRESSIVES"

Bernard Cohn also argues (more convincingly) that after the Mutiny the British had two incompatible theories as to how to rule India. One was called the "feudal" mode, where an Indian aristocracy "had to be recognized and/or created, which could play the part of 'loyal feudatories' to their British queen." It exalted medieval values of vassalage and loyalty. The other was the "modernist" or "progressive" mode, "which looked to a new kind of civic or public order..." and promoted "a representational mode of government based sociologically on communities and interests with individuals representing these entities."[155] Freemasonry was an ideal vehicle for both modes of

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[153] I.e., the Ahluwalia Sikh Raj-i-Rajgan Maharaja Col. Sir Jagajit Singh Bahadur (b. 1872, r. 1877-1949)—see "Medals of Kapurthala," April 19, 2000 <http://haynese.winthrop.edu/medals/ Tmedals/ Kapurthala.html>. Jagatjit Singh joined Lodge *Dalhousie*, No. 639 (E.C.), Mussoorie on September 24, 1894, and became its first Master in 1899. Freemasonry appears to have been passed down in this family—an earlier Maharaja of Kapurthala, Randhir Singh (r. 1852-70), was initiated in Lodge *Hope and Perseverance*, No. 782 (E.C.), Lahore by the Master, R. Geatur—see "Masonic Landmarks in Bengal" in *Bengal Freemasons' Almanac*; reprinted in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 4 (July 1869): 148. See also J.H. Tyler, "History of Lodge 'Hope and Perseverance' No. 782, Lahore," in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 3 (June 1869): 99. See also *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 1 (April 1870): 2—"Maharajah Rundheer Sing, of Kuppoorthalla, accompanied by Colonel Naussau Lees, Political Agent, and twelve servants, embarked for England by the mail steamer of the 26th. The Maharajah was initiated into Freemasonry on the 25th April 1861, in Lodge *Hope and Perseverance*, No. 782, at Lahore. His Highness was one of the few Native Princes who remained faithful and rendered such important services to the British Government during the mutiny." The Maharaja died in April 1870—see "General Intelligence" for April 1870, in issue no. 2 (May 1870): 59. *Hope and Perseverance* was the same lodge in which Rudyard Kipling would be initiated in 1885. The later Maharaja of Kapurthala mentioned above, seems to have been Jagatjit Singh, who joined Lodge *Dalhousie*, No. 639 (E.C.), Mussoorie on September 24, 1894, and became its first Indian Master in 1899. This was also the lodge in which the Maharaja of Cooch-Behar (discussed in a previous chapter) was initiated in 1881—see G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 21.

[154] I.e., Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup (1863-1911).

[155] Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," 166. Both modes aimed at preserving British rule into some distant future, but the Modernists also wanted to instill in Indians ideas of progress, whereas Feudalists believed Indians to be essentially "feudal" in their conception of society. Lord Lytton, for example, is overwhelmingly considered to have been a Feudalist, whereas his predecessor, the "Patron of Freemasonry in India," Lord Mayo, was known as an "apostle of improvement" and was interventionist in regard to the princely states—Ian Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Princes: Paramountcy in British India, 1857-1930* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1982), 128. Lytton's successor, Ripon, was

imperial rule, and in fact could reconcile the incompatibility between them. After all, it exulted in rituals and symbolism which harked back to a pre-modern—often feudal—age, and which could therefore suit royal and aristocratic (and often bourgeois) needs for legitimating ritual. At the same time, the content of Masonic symbolism reflected "enlightened" civic and public virtues. In the same way, the "new pageantry" of the imperial state was shaped by a medievalizing spirit, but "also contributed to modern culture."[156] But before state-sponsored invented tradition and the creation of new titles and honors in 19th-century Europe, Freemasonry, in its lodges and in public rituals, had merged romanticization of the medieval period with the progressive values of the Enlightenment and modernity. This *tour de force* no doubt explains in part the popularity and tremendous success of Freemasonry in the 19th century and the many uses to which it could attempted to be put.[157]

VIII. CONCLUSION

The use of religion, invented tradition, and pageantry to bolster a state or regime is as old as states themselves. In a religiously pluralistic state some regimes turn to syncretism. In pre-colonial India, the Mughal Emperor Akbar (1542-1695) experimented with this. His policies to win the loyalty of non-Muslim subjects, and thereby unify the

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considered to be a Modernist, whereas his successor, Dufferin, soft-pedaled or actually reversed some of Ripon's policies regarding the participation of non-feudal Indians in government and freedom of the press. In addition, one finds conflicting policies between the Central Government and the Governors of Presidencies. Bombay, especially, aggressively championed a "civilizing" policy in the Native States which the supreme government had never whole-heartedly endorsed—see ibid., 158.

156 Peter Merrinton, "Masques, Monuments, and Masons": 5. Merrington even notes that E.M. Forster "wrote and produced two pageants to the received formula, in 1934 and 1938, in which the passage of English history is interpreted as destructive of the land and of the supposed heritage of rural 'Merrie England,' culminating in the invasion of the 'motorcar and aeroplane,' but the allegorical and iconic final purpose of the majority of historical pageants of the period was to affirm a belief in progress" (5-6).

157 Parallel with the growing popularity of Freemasonry in the Raj in the latter half of the 19th century, India underwent a radical transformation along Modernist lines: "All the great social improvements for which British rule is remembered—railways, canal irrigation, famine control, sanitation, epidemiology, mass primary education in the vernacular and higher education in English to university standard—were features of the latter nineteenth century, or in some cases of the twentieth"—Ian Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Princes*, 121-22

Mughal Empire, culminated in the creation of something resembling Freemasonry—an eclectic court religion called *Din-i-Ilahi* ("Divine Religion")—which emphasized ethics, the purification of the soul, and loyalty to the monarch as chief hierophant.[158] Akbar's cult died with him. By contrast, the English monarchy was more successful in establishing its own church around the same time. Indeed, of all European monarchies, the British kings of the early modern period were particularly skilled at manipulating religion for their own ends. As Freemasonry became a part of English society beginning in the 17th century, it was natural that British monarchs would be interested in coopting its supple religious philosophy and social values to serve their own needs (as the Church of England's authority was increasingly questioned by Dissenters, Methodists, and freethinkers), and they succeeded in this during the Hanoverian dynasty. Yet, unlike the *Din-i-Ilahi*, which had been created with the express political purpose of unifying a single state through a common religion among the highest elites, Freemasonry had pre-existed both the Hanoverian state and the British Empire; nor was it even restricted to Britain. Hence, while could be politically useful to the British monarchy and empire, this was not the source of its genesis, and so Freemasonry was not inextricably tied to either. Nor is this to suggest that British royals were not sincere in their attraction to the Craft.

One could argue conversely that Freemasonry had its own agenda and that the British monarchy and empire furthered Masonic aims. Did not the Bengal Masons, in professing their loyalty to the Prince of Wales in 1793, speak of constitutionalism, liberty, and hint at "responsible" government? It was perhaps not by mere happenstance, then, that the Hanoverians became so involved in the Craft and gave their protection to it for so long. The Hanoverians were "primed" to adopt Freemasonry, since they were the only monarchy in Europe in the 18th century which was not absolutist. And if it is true that William of Orange became a Mason in 1690 (see above), this would mean that the

[158] Indeed, Akbar valued loyalty so much in his new religion that he handpicked all members based on this trait. The total number of followers never exceeded nineteen. "Din-i Ilahi," Encyclopædia Britannica Online. April 12, 2000 <http://www.eb.com:180/bol/topic?eu=30976&sctn=1>.

connection between British royalty and Freemasonry was first established precisely at the moment of the Glorious Revolution, when the monarchy's power was constitutionally greatly limited in relation to Parliament. Freemasonry's success in stirring the imagination of social thinkers and the bourgeoisie made it inevitable that it would be drawn into the political arena, especially during the Enlightenment, as Margaret Jacob has shown.[159] More often than not, though, this led to persecution by the state in other parts of Europe. Thus, Freemasonry was protean in its applications, and it came to serve various needs in other countries, including nationalism in India (as we shall see).

Although Freemasonry was an unwieldy instrument for social and political stability, it must be admitted that the British imperial rulers wielded it better than most colonial rulers—or at least tried to—and it came to serve the British Raj as its *de facto* cult, promoting an odd mix of romantic pageantry, mysticism, social order, and a fascination with progress. But was imperial Freemasonry a cynical and conspiratorial effort at "system maintenance," as Paul Rich and the story of Kipling's adventurers in Kafiristan suggest? Or was it a grand vision of a universal polity, with its constituent elements in harmony, that prompted British administrators—and the monarch himself—to want to employ the Craft for imperial unity? For one thing, it is impossible to posit a political genesis for the mystical and antiquarian aspects of Freemasonry, even if they were later used for political purposes. For another, it must be remembered that the universal brotherhood that Freemasonry enjoined on its members reflected a yearning that came out of the religious wars of the 17th century—long before British monarchs took serious notice of the movement, let alone Raj officials. However, a fuller discussion of this important question must await the next installment on Freemasonry and imperialism in the following chapter.

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[159] See, for example, Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans* (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1981), and *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

"The Mother Lodge" [160]
(from "Barrack Room Ballads, II; 1892-96)

There was Rundle, Station Master,
An' Beazely of the Rail,
An' Ackman, Commissariat,
An' Donkin o' the Jail;
An' Blake, Conductor-Sargent,
Our Master twice was 'e,
An' 'im that kept the Europe-shop,
Old Framjee Eduljee.

Outside—"Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!"
Inside—"Brother", and it doesn't
do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we
parted on the Square,
An' I was Junior Deacon in my
Mother Lodge out there!

We'd Bhola Nath, Accountant,
An' Saul the Aden Jew,
An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman
Of the Survey Office, too;
There was Babu Chuckerbutty,
An' Amir Singh the Sikh,
An' Castro from the fittin' sheds,
The Roman Catholick!

We 'adn't good regalia,
An' our Lodge was old an' bare,
But we knew the Ancient Landmarks,
An' we kep' 'em to a 'air;
An' lookin' on it backwards
It often strikes me thus,
There ain't such things as infidels,
Excep', per'aps, it's us.

For monthly, after Labour,
We'd all sit down and smoke
(We dursn't give no banquets,
Lest a Brother's caste were broke),
An' man on man got talkin'
Religion an' the rest,
An' every man comparin'
Of the God 'e knew the best.

So man on man got talkin'
An' not a Brother stirred
Till mornin' waked the parrots
An' that dam' brain-fever bird;
We'd say 'twas 'ighly curious,
An' we'd all ride 'ome to bed,
With Mo'ammed, God, an' Shiva
Changin' pickets in our 'ead.

Full oft on Guv'ment service
this rovin' foot 'ath pressed,
An' bore fraternal greetin's
To the Lodges east an' west,
Accordin' as commanded
From Kohat to Singapore,
But I wish that I might see them
In my Mother Lodge once more!

I wish that I might see them,
My Brethren black and brown,
With the trichies smellin' pleasant
An' the *hog-darn* passin' down;
An' the old khansamah snorin'
On the bottle-khana floor,
Like a Master in good-standing
With my Mother-Lodge once
more.

Outside—"Sergeant! Sir! Salute!
Salaam!"
Inside—"Brother," and it doesn't
do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we
parted on the Square,
An' I was Junior Deacon in my
Mother Lodge out there!

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[160] Rudyard Kipling, "The Mother Lodge," in *Collected Verse of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1907), 318-20.

CHAPTER 7

"BROTHERS" AND "OTHERS": FREEMASONRY AND IMPERIALISM, PT. 2

District Commissioner: "Then may I ask what particular interest you have in these scoundrels?"
Kipling: "Well, they happen to be Freemasons, like myself."
D.C.: "Freemasons!—*those* chaps?! I should think you'd strike them off your rolls."
K: "Ohhh! Once a Mason, always a Mason.
D.C.: "I never could understand how perfectly proper chaps—like yourself—could go about on public occasions wearing aprons and sashes, and shaking hands with total strangers. Just what *is* Masonry, Kipling?"
K: "Oh, it's an ancient order, dedicated to the brotherhood of man under the all-seeing eye of God."
D.C.: "We should have done well to have left that sort of thing behind us in England, my friend—it can never work here."
K: "Oh, there are tales that it *did* work here, before *we* even came. Some audacious scholars can even trace it back to the builders of Solomon's Temple."
D.C.: "Old wives' tales, I suspect."

"The Man Who Would Be King" (film, 1975)[1]

I. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored how Freemasonry became ideologically intertwined with British imperialism, becoming in effect the cult of the empire, with the royal family contributing members as "high priests," and legitimating the imperial project through its own pageantry, ritual, and promotion of loyalty to the throne. This chapter examines the policies and activities of particular British imperialists who were Freemasons, and explores how British imperial conquest and consolidation in the Indian subcontinent could be informed and supported by Freemasonry.

According to the historian Martin Yapp, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries the East India Company's government in India often did not see eye-to-eye with the British government in London regarding foreign affairs pertaining to India. The Home government stressed European stability, and foreign policy after 1815 was "directed

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[1] *The Man Who Would Be King*, dir. John Huston, with Sean Connery, Michael Caine, and Christopher Plummer, Allied Artists, 1975.

primarily towards the maintenance of the European concert." For politicians like Palmerston (1784-1865),[2] for example, "India was a pawn and the Great Game was in Europe, not in Asia...."[3] This orientation often meant avoiding taking steps close to Russia's borders which might alarm or alienate the Russians. For the British in India, by contrast, the internal protection and consolidation of Britain's Indian conquests were paramount concerns, for they saw their hold on India as tenuous.[4]

An actual invasion from the outside, whether by Afghanistan or Russia, was not the major concern in India, nor even taken seriously (although it would in time make for exciting works of fiction!); however, support by these states for activities subversive of British rule *were* treated seriously: "In short, the external enemy was feared because of his potential effect upon the internal enemy."[5] In order to prevent internal revolt—whether by a Muslim conspiracy, an outbreak of warlike peoples, disaffected traditional leaders, or, especially, the Company's own sepoys—the British in India felt that they had to weaken the states on their borders who could supply, give refuge to, or come to the aid of, potential rebels.

This meant that Governors-General and their policy experts often felt compelled to pursue an expansionist or "forward" policy and, where they could not expand, to develop buffer states which in turn had to be kept stable and impervious to foreign intrigue (this was to be the case with Afghanistan). The threat of invasion by Afghanistan or Russia could be, and was, used to win London over to this "forward" policy. Among those members in the Indian government most dedicated to such a policy were the

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[2] Henry J. T. Palmerston was Foreign Minister under the Whigs, in 1830-34, 1835-41, and 1846-51, and was Prime Minister in 1855-58 and 1859-65.

[3] Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 5.

[4] See ibid., 11-12: the British in India were, in the words of Governor-General Bentinck, "'strangers in the land,'" and they repeatedly described themselves as "'men walking in a powder magazine.'"

[5] Ibid., 15. Instability in frontier states was often viewed with alarm, and such instability could be caused by other foreign powers (such as Russia). Any British military reverses suffered at the hands of frontier states threatened a diminution of British prestige in the eyes of potential internal enemies, it was believed, and had to be made up for with overwhelming force or victory somewhere else (hence, the annexation of Sind after the First Afghan War—see below).

ministers, envoys, "Residents,"[6] and "Political Agents," who belonged to the Political Department, either of the central government in India, or of the Bombay Presidency government, since that Presidency bordered on Cutch and Sind, which were at the southern reaches of British India's northwestern frontier. Indeed, concern over the countries which lay beyond the northwestern border of British India, as it came to be formed in 1818/19, "was much stronger the nearer one approached to the frontier itself; thus the Government of Bombay was more ready for intervention than was that of Calcutta."[7] (Bombay's power would also come to reach across the Arabian Sea to Persia, Muscat, and Aden, which was a colony of Bombay.) The "Politicals," as they were known, had the best intelligence concerning their areas and exercised "the greatest influence on British Indian strategic thought" and on Governors and Governors-General.[8]

To better understand the contribution of Freemasonry to British imperial expansion in India, it is necessary to delve into a period earlier than the time-frame of this dissertation, since the active involvement of Freemasonry in British imperialism arises much earlier than 1840, yet paves the way for what was to come.

II. IMPERIAL CONSOLIDATION AND FREEMASONRY

A. The Marquis of Hastings and the "Forward" Policy:

One of the chief architects of the "forward" policy was the Marquis of Hastings, Lord Moira (r. 1813-23).[9] In contrast to his position on India while still in England, after

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[6] Residents were those members of the Foreign and Political Department (i.e., the "Politicals") who were posted to princely states.

[7] Ibid., 182.

[8] Ibid., 9. Regarding those "Politicals" on the frontier, Yapp says: "Their experience and their monopoly of information gave the frontier agents a peculiar importance in the shaping of British policy on the north-west frontier. Situated as they were, they had a vested interest in inducing their Governments to look outwards beyond the frontier. It was the men who came up through the newly-created frontier posts who became the motive force behind the new policies of the 1830s and 1840s"—ibid., 182-83. These would have included the Burnes brothers (more of whom later).

[9] General Francis Rawdon-Hastings, 2nd Earl of Moira and, later, 1st Marquis of Hastings (1754-1826), "was the eldest son of John Rawdon, 1st Earl of Moira, and Lady Elizabeth Hastings. He added Hastings to his surname of Rawdon under his uncle's will of 1790."—Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, *A Persian at the Court*

arriving in India, Moira became a strong supporter of the "forward" policy in relation to the as-yet unsubdued native states.[10] This places him squarely in the camp of the "Politicals," and, in fact, during Moira's administration nearly two-thirds of the Indian subcontinent came under the Company's control.

Moira believed in a two-track method of consolidating British control over India, for alongside the policy of expansion, there was also a "conciliation" policy, which sought to win the hearts and minds of Indians under British rule (especially the aristocracy, but to some extent the rising, but still miniscule, western-educated class), instead of plowing money solely into military expenditure.[11] A number of this native aristocracy would come to be inducted into the Craft, especially after the Mutiny, in what seems to have been an attempt to bind the princes to the British.

B. Persia:

Long before the Mutiny, however, the induction of Indian or neighboring rulers and elites into the Craft points to a connection with the drive to consolidate British conquests and support British strategy. The first Indian ruler to be initiated was Umdat ul-Umara, the Nawab of Arcot, in the 1770s. In London, Lord Moira himself (along with the Duke of Sussex) initiated into Freemasonry the first Persian ambassador to Britain from the Qajar monarch (Fath Ali Shah), Mirza Abul Hassan Khan,[12] about a month before the latter's return to Iran.[13] Mirza Abul Hassan Khan became a Freemason—the

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of King George: The Journal of Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, 1809-10, Margaret Morris Cloake, ed. and trans. (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1988), 265.

[10] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985; reprinted with corrections 1987), 297. In his younger days, Moira had "denounced Britain's government of India as one 'founded in injustice' and 'established by force'" (298).

[11] See Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 17—"Conciliation could go hand in hand with a forward policy—[Sir John] Malcolm advocated both a forward policy beyond the frontier and the judicious cultivation of a native aristocracy within the British territories and those of their protected allies...."

[12] See Dudley Wright, rev., *Gould's History of Freemasonry Throughout the World* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), vol. 4, 195.

[13] Abul Hassan Khan was in England from November 1809 to July 1810. Perhaps the first evidence for Persians inquiring into the Craft is from Bombay in 1803, and also includes those associated with diplomacy, as was seen in a previous chapter, where the Indo-Persian, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, upon his return to India after a journey of four years through Europe and the Middle East, records in his journal that in Bombay he made the acquaintance of the late Persian ambassador's nephew, who was anxious to learn

first Persian to do so in Britain—in London. Abul Hassan's journal entry for June 14, 1810 reads: "I spent some time riding; and in the evening I went to a meeting of freemasons as the guest of Moira. He was very kind and hospitable. One of the Royal Princes, the Duke of Sussex, was there. I also became a freemason, which was highly gratifying."[14] Although the Prince of Wales (later, George IV) was Grand Master at this time, having been elected in 1805, Lord Moira had been the acting Grand Master since 1806.[15] Abul Hassan Khan had been proposed for Freemasonry by the diplomat, Sir Gore Ouseley, his *mihmandar*, or guide. According to Martin Yapp, between 1798 and 1849 Britain "had experimented with several strategies for the defence of India. The first was that of the Iranian buffer."[16]

It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that when Abul Hassan Khan returned to Persia,[17] Sir Gore Ouseley was both appointed British ambassador to Tehran *and* granted

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about Freemasonry from Abu Taleb Khan—see Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803. Written by Himself, in the Persian Language*, vol. 2; trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), 392-93.

[14] Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, *A Persian at the Court of King George*, 265. Becoming a Freemason "and his acceptance of the East India Company's monthly pension are, even today, held against him by some of his own countrymen, who—with little or no justification—regard him as having sold himself to the English."—Denis Wright, Introduction, *A Persian at the Court of King George*, by Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, 17.

[15] A.E. Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, vol. 2, 75. Yet, on pg. 71, Waite says that in 1790 the Earl of Moira "was appointed Acting Grand Master, first under the Duke of Cumberland and then under the Prince of Wales." It appears that Moira had to absent himself for a period between 1790 and 1806, being re-appointed upon his return.

[16] Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 581. Here was another example of a divergence between London and Calcutta, for with "but few exceptions, from 1808 onwards the rulers of British India regarded the Iranian alliance as an expensive and unwanted albatross which had been hung around their necks by the Government of Britain; an encumbrance which stood in the way of a more reliable, independent strategy in the Gulf." (In the late 19th century, though, Lord Curzon was to renew the idea of the importance of Iran to India's defense.) Even the British Government, argues Yapp, was less interested in Iran as a buffer state against France and then Russia, than it was in avoiding a dispute with Russia over Iran. Only the members of the British mission in Tehran were truly committed to the idea of Iran as a buffer state and the need to keep it from falling under Russian influence.

[17] Abul Hassan Khan was Persia's first foreign minister from 1824 to 1834, when Fath Ali Shah died, and again occupied that post from 1840 until his death in 1846. In the latter period "he played a helpful role in the Anglo-Persian negotiations that resulted in the commercial treaty of 1841"—Denis Wright, Introduction, *A Persian at the Court of King George*, by Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, 19. "Following the defeat of Napoleon and the conclusion of an alliance with the Russians the British no longer attached much importance to the Persian alliance." Abul Hassan Khan returned to London in 1819, but "failed to rekindle British interest in his country and returned to Tehran with little to show for his efforts apart from some satisfaction over arms deliveries" (ibid.).

a patent (no doubt by Moira) as Provincial Grand Master for Persia.[18] Not only was Abul Hassan now bound by the "mystic tie" to Ouseley, but the year following his return to Persia, he would be bound, as well, to the new Governor-General of India, Lord Moira.[19] It is difficult to dismiss the suggestion that the British government (or rather, the Masons in it) were attempting to use Freemasonry to ritually bind potential allies to Britain, especially when one considers who was at Abul Hassan's initiation. Unfortunately for the British, France, too, had many Masons in government, including, it seems, Napoleon himself,[20] and in 1808, Askeri Khan (more correctly, 'Askar Khan Afshar), a Persian prince and the Shah's ambassador to France soon after the signing of the Treaty of Finkelstein between Iran and France, was initiated in Paris.[21] This suggests that the French thought it worthwhile to induct Persian diplomats into the Brotherhood. It is difficult to know if membership in Freemasonry would have bound Persians more to their British than to their French "brothers." However, a suspicion that the other side might be using Freemasonry in a political/diplomatic manner could have pushed the British into doing the same, in a "scramble" for allies.[22] Moreover, the political colorations of French

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[18] See Dudley Wright, rev., *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, vol. 4, 194. Ouseley set up no lodges in Iran, however.

[19] See Hamid Algar, "An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3 (October 1970): 277—For Ouseley "to be linked as ambassador in the fraternal bond of masonry to Mirza Abu-l-Hasan Khan, who subsequently became chief official responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs, was of obvious political advantage. The masonic link was reinforced financially: from 1810, the year of his initiation, until his death in 1846, Mirza Abu-l-Hasan Khan received a monthly allowance of one thousand rupees *from the political department of the East Indian Company*. This sum was to be transmitted by Sir Gore Ouseley if satisfied with Mirza Abu-l-Hasan Khan's conduct of affairs" (my italics). It would be fascinating to follow the trail of 19th-century international treaty-making into the Lodge! A minor example from Bombay of British officials and foreign diplomats consorting as "brothers" occurred when an Italian Consul, Carlo Grandona, joined Lodge *St. George*, No. 549 (E.C.)—which attracted the cream of Bombay's civil servants—in 1879. Another instance was when an Assistant American Consul, Charles Fisher Meyer, joined in the same lodge 1899. See Isaac M. Shields, *History of Lodge "St. George" of Bombay (No. 549, E.C.)*, (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1898), 93, 98.

[20] See for example Lucien Sabah, "Napoleon 1er Fut Franc-Mason" [Napoleon was a Freemason], *Revue Historique des Armées* [France] 1990 (4): 82-85. Also, Jean-André Faucher, "Napoleon, Franc-Maçon" [Napoleon, Freemason], *Historama* [France] 1986 (34): 56-63.

[21] See A.E. Waite *A New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, vol. 2, 75.

[22] See Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803. Written by Himself, in the Persian Language*, vol. 1, trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), 194, where he states that in 1800, at a Masonic garden party outside London attended by the future George IV, the Masons "prevailed upon

and British Freemasonry were different, and so it could be argued that there was an ideological spectrum within the Craft which paralleled the ideological divide between revolutionary France and a more conservative Britain. In Hamid Algar's opinion, these two initiations took place not only with the "active approval" of the host governments, but "were intended at least in part as deliberate acts of policy. To tie the fraternal bonds of masonry was a means of securing political influence."[23] Certainly, Abul Hassan Khan could not fail to have been impressed by being inducted into the Craft at a meeting attended by the king's own son, and to know that the heir to the throne, was the Grand Master. Once in India, Moira continued the policy of inducting the leaders of border/buffer states: Nawab Ghazi-ud-Din Haydar of Avadh appears to have been initiated by Moira (see Chapter 2).[24]

C. Conciliation:

After prosecuting an unprecedented expansion of the Company's rule, Moira also reached out to the western-educated and bourgeoisie by supporting various "measures for the education of the 'natives' and encouraged freedom of the press. He allowed newspapers to circulate at a reduced rate of postage, and it was during his administration that 'a native journal' appeared in print.... [T]he salary and status of Indian judges were improved, [and] Eurasians were employed in state service for the first time...."[25] These policies were often carried out in the face of hostility by the Directors.

This strategy of winning hearts and minds accorded well with Masonic principles of enlightenment, progress, and fairplay, which was reasonable to expect, since Moira had

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Effendi Ismael, the Turkish ambassador, and Effendi Yusuf, his secretary, to embrace their tenets; and both the Mahommedans were initiated into all the mysteries of Freemasonry."

[23] Hamid Algar, "An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran": 277. According to Algar: "In the case of Mirza Abu-l-Hasan Khan Shirazi, the evidence of political motive is decisive" (ibid.). Actually, the evidence is far from decisive, but it *is* suggestive.

[24] In 1815 Ghazi ud-Din Haider, the sixth Nawab of Awadh, was persuaded by the Marquis of Hastings to declare his independence from the Mughals, which he did. He also later issued coins bearing his name and not the Mughal Emperor's—see Dr. Nupam Mahajan, "Coins of Princely States of India" page of "Nupam's Webpage for the Indian Coins." April 19, 2000 <http://www.med.unc.edu/~nupam/ prince1.html>.

[25] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 298-99.

been Acting Grand Master of England for many years.[26] Indeed, Freemasonry could be married to both policies—expansion and conciliation—for Freemasons could view the annexation of territories as bringing enlightenment to those regions through a British Masonic civilizing mission, and the Masonic principle of brotherhood could serve to unite the conquered and the conqueror (recall Napier's use of antiquarianism in Chapter 6). Both the "forward" and conciliatory policies were directed towards the consolidation of British rule in India, and British imperialists in India simply could not ignore Freemasonry's potential for achieving this end, as the District Grand Master for Bombay, Edward Tyrrell Leith, pointed out at his inaugural address in 1879:

> One of the first duties of a Mason is to be a good citizen, for Freemasonry is ever on the side of peace, of order and of legally constituted authority. *Its importance for this country indubitably lies in the fact that it spreads abroad the principles of true toleration and teaches unswerving loyalty to the Crown.* I venture to assert that it is an enormous social, and in the widest sense of the term, *political force, which no statesman can afford either to ignore or despise.*[27]

It is important to note here the link between loyalty to the crown and "true toleration"—in other words, religious pluralism without favoritism towards any particular religion. This is the basis of the secularism, civic-mindedness (here expressed as being a "good citizen"), and obedience to properly constituted (i.e., legitimate) authority that are the basis of the modern Enlightenment state.

That Moira's political ideology and policies in India—and the shape and character of British India that resulted from them—were influenced by his Freemasonry is strongly suggested by a speech he gave to the Masons of Calcutta on December 26, 1822. First, he reasserts his committed involvement in the Craft, saying that his "fostering care [of Freemasonry in India] was incumbent on me from the superintendence which I have

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[26] This suggests that Moira believed in these principles as good things in themselves, even if he also believed they might give rise to a positive opinion of the British among Indians.

[27] Edward Tyrrell Leith, D.G.M., January 30, 1879; reprinted in K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* (Bombay: n.p., n.d.), 27 (my italics).

held"[28] and proclaims his "lively interest in the promotion of what I believe to be highly beneficial to Society."[29] Moira then offers a fascinating perspective on Freemasonry's role in the development of modern society:

> The veil thrown over Masonry renders its operation silent and unobserved; yet the influence of a body spread through all classes of Society, pervading every circle, and diffusing (through its separate members) opinions digested and matured from remote periods in the Brotherhood, must be powerful in effect. I think the traces of its useful sway are discoverable if we cast our eyes on older times. Reflect upon that semi-barbarism which was the condition of all the states of Europe in ages not long past. What apparent cause was there for a sudden and rapidly progressive mitigation of the rude oppressions which characterized the day? If none such can be confidently pointed out, is it not reasonable to recur to an agency which, while it is unobstructive, its very nature is to be active? The secrecy observed in Masonic Proceedings, and the rigid scrutiny exercised into the private character of candidates for admission, excited the curiosity of the higher ranks, and at the same time removed every fear of their discrediting themselves by becoming members of the fraternity. Once initiated, they received lessons *which never could have reached them in any other situation.* They were taught that, throughout the necessary gradations in a Community, and amid the unavoidable distinction arising from talents or property, man was still the brother of man. This primary position once adopted, all corollaries from it were readily embraced. The doctrine imbibed in the Lodge became the rule of action for the man of might in his public sphere, and *his example disseminated the principles of humanity and justice to the utmost extent of the circle.*[30]

"Surely this is not a visionary supposition," Moira argues, for one need only observe the "difference of character between the nations of Europe where Masonry has flourished, and those in which it has been proscribed; and let the contrast, so favourable for the former, support my hypothesis."[31] For stronger proof of his thesis, Moira urges his audience to "advert to the Despotism, the Ferocity, the Degradation of Manhood in the Asiatic regions where no casual ray of Masonry has ever pierced the gloom." Moira concludes by stating that in Europe "what were once masonic principles alone, are so

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[28] Because of his position in the Grand Lodge of England, Moira was made Acting Grand Master for English Masonry throughout the East Indies by the Duke of Sussex (not just Provincial Grand Master of Bengal)—an office and title which lapsed when Moira left India in 1823.

[29] Hugh David Sandeman, *Selections From the Calcutta Gazettes of the Years 1816 to 1823*, vol. 9, part 2 (Calcutta: Bibhash Gupta, 1987; 1869), 513.

[30] Ibid., 514 (my italics).

[31] Ibid.

generally prevalent that it would now be difficult to make it believed, that they were once acknowledged only in a confined Society...."

According to Moira's sociology, political liberalism—indeed, modern society itself—had its roots in the spread of Freemasonry among the ruling classes! Freemasonry replaced their class consciousness with the principle of brotherhood, which manifested itself in new laws and social behavior, leading to humaneness and equal justice for all classes.[32] Where Freemasonry has been suppressed or not reached at all, despotism prevails. This is a variant of the theory of Oriental despotism, for it makes despotism inversely proportional to the spread of Freemasonry! (Furthermore, such despotism is not even exclusively Oriental, for Moira, but also exists in parts of Europe where Freemasonry has been banned.)[33]

With such a sociology, it is reasonable to read in Moira's "forward" policy—as well as in his greater fairness to Indians, his open press policies, and the encouragement of education—an attempt to conquer and then "Masonize" Indian states and their elites, so that they might play a role in the enlightenment of their societies similar to that played by European rulers and aristocrats.

Important Masons in the early 19th century also saw the impress of Freemasonry on Moira's policies. James Burnes, at the stone-laying ceremony for the Jeejeebhoy

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[32] Cf. George Oliver, *The Book of the Lodge*, 3rd ed. (1864; Wellingborough, Northhampshire, England: Aquarian Press, 1986), 23: in Freemasonry "'a king is reminded, that though a crown may adorn his head and a sceptre his hand, the blood in his veins is derived from the common parent of mankind, and is no better than that of his meanest subjects....'".

[33] Intriguingly, Benedict Anderson, argues that in a pre-modern dynastic realm (as opposed to a modern national state), the fundamental relationship is vertical—between the king and his subjects—rather than horizontal, as in a nation, where people are bound together as citizens and the dominant organizing political principle is fraternity. Moira implicitly puts forward the same idea, but argues that, due to Freemasonry, even certain European monarchs adopted this horizontal fraternal relationship (no doubt thinking of the Hanoverians) and, in doing so, fundamentally altered European society. Both Anderson and Moira hold that this sense of horizontal connectedness is relatively new, even though modern society takes for granted that it is old—even primordial—and that it was driven by enlightened elites. Anderson's preconditions for such a change in consciousness do not include Freemasonry, whereas for Moira Freemasonry, by being able to induct elites and "enlighten" them, quickly fostered changes in laws, which in turn affected the status of bourgeois social groups. That Masonic kings like the British William IV worked hard to get the Reform Bill of 1831 passed supports this thesis (his fellow Mason, the Duke of Wellington, was also instrumental in getting the bill passed).

Hospital in 1843, publicly stated that Moira's policy decisions were indeed inspired by Freemasonry: "The late Marquis of Hastings, certainly inferior to none of the illustrious men that Europe has lent to Asia, was a stately pillar of our craft; and there is a valued and elevated brother present, who could testify how deeply its principles influenced the conduct of that distinguished soldier and statesman."[34]

It should be remembered, too, that Moira went against London in ordering further conquests in India. The above speech suggests that, as an agent of the Grand Architect of the Universe, Moira may have been unable to resist the temptation to use the political and military power at his disposal to effect the same changes which Masonry had accomplished in Western Europe. After all, Moira was describing the grandest civilizing mission of them all—enlightenment, justice, and "humanity" in Asia—and it was *Freemasonry's* mission, he believed. Also, Moira and other British Masons could not deny that Britain was the most friendly country in Europe to Freemasonry, nor could they deny that Freemasonry had achieved its highest institutional development in Britain (with the founding of the Grand Lodge system in the early 18th century—the "mother" of all Grand Lodges in the world). Moreover, as Britain became the supreme military and industrial power of the 19th century, "her power was reflected in the stature of the British lodges, which enjoyed considerable political and intellectual patronage."[35] Many British Masons throughout the century no doubt concluded that Britain and British rule were the primary vehicle for advancing Freemasonry's salvific mission, and that, therefore, they should support the imperial state. There was, then, a strong Masonic justification for the British imperial project.

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[34] James Burnes, reported in *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, January 4, 1843: 4.

[35] See Paul Rich, "Kim and the Magic House: Freemasonry and Kipling," in Marie Mulvey Roberts and Hugh Ormsby-Lennon, eds., *Sacred Texts: The Literature of Secret Societies* (New York: AMS Press, 1995), 324.

III. THE BURNES BROTHERS

Moira's views almost certainly informed the ideology and administrative policies of future Masonic "Politicals," as well. For example, James Burnes, who played an important "political" role in India (see below), referred to Moira, in an article about Freemasonry to the *Bombay Times*, as "one of the most accomplished and learned Brethren that ever existed."[36] In imitation of Moira's conciliatory policies towards Indians, Burnes, it will be remembered, led the way in bringing western-educated Indians into Freemasonry and was vexed over their feelings concerning the Knights Templar, seeking instead to create a more inclusive chivalric order for Indian Masons.[37] Even before Indians were being initiated into the Craft (1843/44) Burnes contributed a long piece on Freemasonry to the *Bombay Gazette* which he ended by stating: "'My chief object in troubling you with the above is, that the Native Community may understand the principles... of an institution which I know creates curiosity of [*sic*] some of the most intelligent amongst them.'"[38] Burnes also formulated the rationale for the annexation of Sind, which was his own contribution to the "forward" policy.

In the 1825 to 1840 period, the British had yet to execute the final stages in their conquest of the northwestern part of the Subcontinent. The role of Freemasons in those subsequent steps of imperial expansion is a fascinating one, both in terms of the players and their ideology. Especially important in promoting the consolidation of the empire, through both a "forward" and "concliation" policy, were the Burnes brothers, in particular

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[36] See letter to the editor of the *Bombay Gazette* (January 20, 1840) by "A Past Master"; reprinted in A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 16.

[37] One of the western-educated Indians who would later become Freemasons, the Parsi Naoroji Furdunji, also served with Alexander Burnes in Sind in 1837, and was highly praised by the latter, who called Furdunji his "protégé." Like his brother, James Burnes, Alexander says, "I was very anxious to give an opportunity to the youth of that presidency [i.e., Bombay] to distinguish themselves on so important an occasion as the present journey afforded them...."—Alexander Burnes, *Cabool: Being a Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in that City, in the Years 1836, 7, and 8* (London: John Murray, 1842), 42. One wonders if Furdunji first learned of Freemasonry from Alexander, as well!

[38] James Burnes (under the pseudonym, "A Past Master"), letter to the editor, *Bombay Gazette*, January 27, 1840; quoted in A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 18.

James (1801-62) and Alexander (1805-41), who arrived in Bombay from Scotland in October 1821 in the service of the East India Company. While James, a doctor, seriously dabbled with the Political Department by occupying himself with foreign affairs and intelligence-gathering, Alexander actually became a prominent "Political."[39]

James' brother Alexander was assigned to the Infantry, but the Company soon came to appreciate his general knowledge and his aptitude for acquiring languages, and made use of him for intelligence work, which also included a good deal of geography.[40] Like his Macedonian namesake (whom he was always conscious of, and whom he allowed himself to be identified with[41]), Alexander, travelled extensively throughout Afghanistan, and even beyond, into Central Asia, and Persia, observing, mapping,[42]

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[39] Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 183. Political work, "by virtue of its interest, its financial rewards, and the power and responsibility which it offered to young men, attracted some of the ablest and most ambitious men in the Company's service." In the Political Department, seniority mattered less than using one's initiative and seizing the moment. Hence, Political Agents "tended to be men of considerable initiative, or to put it more crudely, men with an eye to the main chance." This often meant that "Politicals" in the field pursued their personal advancement "through the extension of British authority." Indeed, in a letter from 1835, Alexander writes: "What are a Colonelcy and a K.L.S. to me? I look far higher, and shall either die or be so"—quoted in George Buist, "Memoir of Sir Alexander Burnes," in James Burnes, *Notes on the Name and Family of Burnes* (Edinburgh: Printed for private circulation, 1851), 23.

[40] For which Alexander won fame and recognition in the Geographical Societies of France and England, and won praise from the great geographer, Baron Humboldt—see William Alexander Laurie, "Memoir of James Burnes, K.H., F.R.S.," 4 and fn.; in James Burnes, *Notes on His Name and Family.*

[41] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 3: "He often used to say, in later days, that he found his name a help to him. In Afghanistan he was known as 'Sikandar Burnes'...." See, for example, Alexander Burnes, *Travels to Bokhara; Being an Account of a Journey From India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia; also, Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus, From the Sea to Lahore, With Presents From the King of Great Britain; Performed Under the Orders of the Supreme Government of India, in the Years 1831, 1832, and 1833*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1834), ix, where he speaks of a "desire that I had always felt to see new countries, and visit the conquests of Alexander." And again: "In our search for the remnants of Alexander's cities, we are led into reflections on the state of the country in those days; and it is curious to compare them with our own times" (59). Also, on pages 96-97, he mentions cutting a new seal, "in the manner of the country [i.e., Afghanistan], and bearing the name of 'Sikunder Burnes.'" See also Alexander Burnes, *Cabool*, 168, where he obviously enjoys being called "Sikunder," for he mentions that in Kabul in 1837, he received a letter from Murad Beg, the chief of Kunduz, which began: "Sikunder Burnes, Firingee Angrez." One wonders if Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" drew its inspiration from Burnes' experience. Besides the idea of a latter-day Alexander, Burnes also gives a description of the Kafiris in his book—the main tribe in Kipling's work.

[42] That geographical research was closely linked to political work was stated explicitly in a letter from Charles Norris, the Chief Secretary of the Political Department, in January 1830, where, in speaking of Alexander Burnes, he states: "'Nothing can more fully evince the expediency of combining political duties with those of geographical research than the result of Lieutenant Burnes' visit to Parkur;....'"—quoted in George Buist, "Memoir of Sir Alexander Burnes," 9.

playing the antiquarian, and faithfully sending his notes back to the Royal Asiatic Society in Bombay, of which his brother was a member and officer (James served as vice-president definitely by 1843, and probably earlier).[43] It is unclear when Alexander first became a Freemason, but he definitely was one by 1834, and probably was initiated in or before 1831.[44]

James Burnes, by contrast, served in the Company's Medical Service in Cutch.[45] He was joined there in 1826 by his brother, Alexander,[46] who was made Assistant to the Resident, Henry Pottinger.[47] Because of his medical expertise, in 1827 James Burnes was invited to Sind for an extended visit by Mir Murad Ali Talpur, the most powerful of the

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[43] See, for example, Alexander Burnes, *Cabool*, 263: "In addition to our own labours I had, with a view to increase our antiquarian stores, despatched a messenger, a Syud, into Toorkistan, with directions to proceed by Balkh and Shibargam to Bokhara, thence to Samarkand, Kokan, and Cashgar, and to return, if possible, by Pameer and Koondooz. The first portion of this journey he performed with success; and transmitted to me some valuable coins of Bactria, which now, under Professor Wilson's guardianship, occupy a place in the Museum at the India House...." And again, on page 268, we read of various local manuscripts on the geography of Central Asia that "[a]ll these I forwarded to the Geographical Society of Bombay, an institution which from its position is peculiarly calculated to follow out such inquiries; but, indeed, it is impossible that any Oriental society... should be indifferent to the literature of men 'whose emulation diffused the taste and the rewards of science from Samarcand and Bokhara to Fez and Cordova.'" Perhaps Burnes was consciously countering the disparaging statements by Macauley a little earlier regarding Oriental literature.

[44] The minutes of *St. Peter's* Lodge in Montrose, Scotland, record that in February 1834 Alexander was made an honorary member and that he was already a member of Lodge *Benevolent*, No. 746 (E.C.) in Bombay—see A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 4. *Benevolent* had been established in Poona in 1822 but subsequently moved to Bombay—see K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* (Bombay: n.p., n.d.). Since Alexander was traveling to Bokhara and Persia in the years 1831 to 1833, arriving in Bombay in January 1833, and then almost immediately being summoned to Calcutta, where he appears to have stayed continuously before leaving from there for England on June 10, 1833, it seems unlikely that he would have had time to have been initiated in this period in Bombay (in Lodge *Benevolent*) before showing up in Lodge *St. Peter's* in Scotland in 1834. Therefore, I think the chances are high that he was already a Mason before he left for Bokhara in 1831. See George Buist, "Memoir of Sir Alexander Burnes," 16-17.

[45] As Surgeon to the Residency in Cutch.

[46] Harry Johnston, *Pioneers in India* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1993; 1913), 292. See also Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 119, who says that Alexander Burnes occupied this position from 1823 to 1829. Martin Yapp claims that Alexander Burnes took up this post in 1830 (see Martin Yapp, 184), but given that he set off that year on a trip to Central Asia, we must accept one of the earlier dates.

[47] See Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 184. Cutch was under the supervision of the Government of Bombay. Regarding Pottinger, he had been the Resident since 1820. In 1842 he would conduct the second and final phase of the Opium War with China (1839-42) and impose on it the Treaty of Nanking on behalf of Britain—see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Fall of Imperial China* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 136-37.

Sindhi Amirs.[48] In addition to his medical ministrations, Burnes played the role of a British spy while in Sind: he took detailed notes of the towns and forts he travelled to, their history, economy, and the strength, weapons, leadership, and tactics of the military forces he encountered, all of which he published as a book.[49] Burnes painted the government of Sind under the Amirs in a bad light—especially that of his host,[50] and recommended Sind's takeover by the British in order to secure good government to the people.[51] He even told his readers—whom he no doubt hoped would include British policy-makers—the ways by which the country could be invaded and conquered![52] Burnes had thus quickly taken on a political role in Sind,[53] and his usefulness to the

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[48] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 672. Despite the Sindhi Amirs not being generally well-disposed to the British at this time, Burnes, according to Pottinger in a report to the Governor-General (Bentinck) in 1828, won the affection of the Amirs, who referred to him not only as "'the most skilful of all physicians, but their best friend, and the cementer of the bonds of amity between the two Governments'"—Sir Henry Pottinger to the Government of India (Political Department, No. 19 of 1828), in William Alexander Laurie, "Memoir of James Burnes," 5.

[49] James Burnes, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Sinde* (Edinburgh: John Stark, 1831). This was originally published in Bombay in 1829, with permission of the Bombay Government "for the perusal of the author's friends." Burnes' *A Sketch of the History of Cutch* was published with the *Narrative* as a single volume. An antiquarian like his brother Alexander, James was fascinated by the travels of Alexander the Great in the region, and devoted his closing chapter to remarks on Alexander's travels through Sind.

[50] Ibid., 65. Mir Murad Ali Talpur's prevailing feature, Burnes wrote, was "avarice," for whose gratification he was ever ready to sacrifice "his own dignity and the interests of his people." Burnes stated that "altogether his character may be summed up as that of a selfish and gloomy despot, an Asiatic Tiberius, or Philip the Second, ruling a kingdom by the energies of his mind, with none of the better feelings of the human heart" (ibid., 66). Burnes felt that Murad Ali more completely resembled "the former of these monsters"—Tiberius. The government of Sind was a "pure military despotism" and, for Burnes, "the great misfortune of the people, next to the circumstance of their being entirely at the mercy of their rulers, is, that the latter are ignorant of the important truth, that in a well regulated kingdom *the interest of the prince and the people are identical*" (ibid., 73-74; my italics).

[51] See ibid., 121, where Burnes writes that there is no district "which would better repay the fostering care of a mild and enlightened management than Sinde. The people of that country and our government might mutually congratulate each other and themselves on the advantages they had gained; and while the one was grateful for the introduction of free institutions and a benignant rule, the other might glory in the acquisition of a valuable and productive addition to its dominions." Other writers a little after Burnes contradicted his negative impressions, which suggests that Burnes had an agenda—see Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 672. (See also Alexander Burnes, *Cabool*, 27, where he states that Mir Murad Ali was dead when he visited Sind in 1837.)

[52] See ibid., 120-21—"Were such an event to happen, as happen in all probability it will, from causes as those which have led to the already mighty extension of our empire,...." See pages 115-120 for his analysis of Sindhi defenses, fighting abilities, and commitment to resistance in case of a British invasion, and the possible use of the riverine system to mount such an invasion.

[53] William Alexander Laurie, "Memoir of James Burnes," 6. On Burnes' return to British India, the Governor-General commended his intelligence-gathering, and the Government of Bombay ordered that the narrative of his sojourn in Sind be circulated to public servants, and printed at Government expense.

Political Department of the Bombay Presidency was highly esteemed and appreciated, both as regards Cutch and Sind.[54]

In 1833, while on sick leave in Britain, James Burnes travelled in high circles. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, a notorious enclave of Freemasons, and he was presented at Court by his friend, the Earl of Dalhousie (who had erstwhile been in command of the army in India, and was a relative of the Governor-General from 1848 to 1856, the Earl *and* Marquis of Dalhousie). King William IV—also a Freemason[55]—made Burnes a knight of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order (hence the "K.H." after his name). It was in Edinburgh that Burnes was initiated into Freemasonry in August 1834, along with his brother, Charles (of the Bombay Army) in Lodge *Kilwinning-Cannongate.*[56] There, Lord Ramsay, the future Governor-General of India,[57] chaired an event which publicly honored Burnes and was a member of a committee that presented Burnes with a "magnificent silver vase, bearing, besides a masonic inscription, an intimation that it was a token of 'regard and esteem for him as a gentleman.'"[58] James' return to Bombay in December 1837 was thus as a man of far higher prestige than

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Through John Malcolm, the Governor of Bombay, it also presented a copy to the Royal Asiatic Society in Britain.

[54] Ibid., 8. Despite Bombay's plaudits, however, John Malcolm, the Governor, rejected Burnes' views for the conquest of Sind (which had been transmitted by Henry Pottinger); however within two years the President of the Board of Control, Lord Ellenborough (he would become Governor-General from February 1842 to July 1844), "had launched a scheme which incorporated Burnes's vision of the Indus as the high road to Central Asia"—Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 182. Some years later, in 1838, Alexander Burnes was to be responsible for writing the 10-article treaty between one of the Amirs of Sind, Mir Rustam of Khairpur, and the East India Company, which called for the Amir's state to act in "subordinate co-operation" with the East India Company—see Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 673. Thus, the absorption of Sind into the British Empire proceeded in a piecemeal, but deliberate, fashion.

[55] See "Freemasonry," in *The Graphic*; reprinted in *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 11, no. 11 (February 1875): 409.

[56] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 4. Another brother, David (M.D. of London, who entered the Royal Navy as a Surgeon in 1826 and retired in 1835), also was inducted into the Craft on the same occasion. All three were "entered, passed, and raised [i.e., to the third degree] in the course of the evening" (ibid.). Such an exceptional action shows the esteem in which the Burnes family was held. Alexander was already a Freemason.

[57] James Andrew Broun-Ramsay, Earl and Marquis of Dalhousie. In India Dalhousie would become notorious "forwardist" and modernizer, being associated with the absorption of Panjab, the encouragement of the railroad in India, the annexation of Avadh, and the introduction of the ryotwari system there.

[58] William Alexander Laurie, "Memoir of James Burnes, K.H., F.R.S.," 8.

would normally be accorded a mere Company physician. He was now a recognized and influential "gentleman" in British and Continental scholarly and scientific circles, in aristocratic and royal circles, and in political circles within India. He became "one of the most elegant and attractive members of general society in Western India."[59]

Before leaving Scotland in 1837 James had been invested with the authority to found a Provincial Grand Lodge in Bombay under the Grand Lodge of Scotland, which he did on January 1, 1838.[60] As the Provincial Grand Master for Western India for twelve years, James lent his prestige to Freemasonry in India and revived its fortunes in the Bombay Presidency. In the 1840s, he was the most respected Freemason in Western India, and one of the two most respected Masons in India, the other being Dr. John Grant, the District Grand Master for the English Constitution lodges of the Bengal Presidency. Burnes was, in the words of Grant, besides a "'well instructed, highly qualified *brother of the Craft*,'" also a "'philosophic observer,'" a "'shrewd statist,'"[61] and a "'calm, looking forward [i.e., forward-looking] politico-economist.'"[62] In keeping with his Masonic civilizing mission, Burnes became one of the trustees of the Oriental Bank in Bombay, a "warm promoter of the schemes for the promotion and encouragement of the arts and manufactures, in an improved form, among the natives,"[63] the President of the Medical and Physical Society, and the Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay. He was also appointed a member of the Board of Education in 1848.[64]

Among James Burnes' co-founders of the P.G.L. were his brothers, "Capt. Sir Alexander Burnes"—now a Fellow of the Royal Society and "Envoy to Cabul"—who

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[59] Ibid., 15.

[60] Although at first they were a Provincial Grand Lodge without "daughter" lodges, the only lodge in Bombay at the time, *Perseverance*, being under the English banner. Burnes became Master of that lodge in December 1838 for about two years and shortly afterwards *Perseverance* seceded to the Scottish banner. See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 1, 7.

[61] This is an indication that Burnes discussed Indian politics within Masonic circles, in this case, with John Grant.

[62] John Grant, quoted in William Alexander Laurie, "Memoir of James Burnes," 11.

[63] Ibid., 14.

[64] Ibid., 12.

served as Provincial Grand Senior Warden, and Lt. Charles Burnes (1812-41), of the 17th Regiment of the Bombay Native Infantry, who served as Provincial Grand Registrar.[65] James appointed as Deputy Provincial Grand Master James Erskine of Cardros, the Political Agent for Kathiawar.[66] Later, in 1843, we also find as a Provincial Grand Warden, J.P. Willoughby, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, whose political expertise in the service of the Bombay Government has already been mentioned.[67] The previous Chief Secretary, Lestock R. Reid, was also a founder of the P.G.L., and its first Provincial Grand Junior Warden.[68] Clearly, the new Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India was an enclave of "Politicals" or those who, like James Burnes, were valued amateur "Politicals."[69] The merging of the goals of the "Politicals" with those of Freemasonry was made explicit in a speech James gave to about fifty Masons in Bombay at the Masonic St. John's Day feast on December 27, 1839. After describing the state of Masonry in western India, Burnes then mentioned other Bombay Masons "who are now absent, engaged in upholding the glory of our nation in Cen[t]ral Asia, where still a wider field for Masonic practice and forbearance lies open to them...."[70] Burnes was, of course, referring to his "Political" brother, Alexander, and other Masons in his entourage.[71]

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[65] James Burnes, *Notes on the Name and Family of Burnes*, 41.

[66] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 1-2.

[67] See ibid., 29. J.P. Willoughby (1798-1866) was Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay at the time. See Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 9: "The Bombay Secretariat was an important repository of expertise in relation to these areas [i.e., the Persian Gulf and the border states along the southern section of British India's western frontier] and this knowledge was deployed to considerable effect by powerful public servants such as Francis Warden and J.P. Willoughby."

[68] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 1.

[69] See Letter to the Government, Political Department, No. 123, September 27, 1832, where James Burnes' services to the Political Department "'amply evinced the greatest zeal and ability for the public service'"; quoted in William Alexander Laurie, "Memoir of James Burnes," 8. There were twenty-four members in all, and the rest save one belonged to the military.

[70] James Burnes, speech on December 27, 1839, Bombay; in A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 11-14.

[71] James was speaking of Alexander's trip that would be recorded in the latter's book, *Cabool*. Reviewing Alexander's earlier *Travels Into Bokhara*, the London (?) *Foreign Quarterly Review*, in or about 1834, stated that from "'these volumes, the statesman will best learn the policy of those countries that border on our dominions in India, and see whether they can be established as bulwarks against aggressive ambition, or whether they are to be dreaded as future agents in our expulsion from Hindustan'"—quoted in George Buist, "Memoir of Sir Alexander Burnes," 18. Hence, Central Asia was a field for the "forward" policy and Freemasonry simultaneously.

James Burnes was the foremost ideologue of Freemasonry in India in the 1840s, and the one who most recognized the role that Freemasonry could and, indeed, should, play in cementing the bond of sentiment between Indians and Britons—that is, in consolidating British rule in India by winning the hearts and minds of Indians. Burnes' admiration for Moira has already been noted. Unlike Dr. John Grant, the District Grand Master of Bengal who oversaw the introduction of By-Law 55, which made the initiation of Indians almost impossible in that Presidency, Burnes adopted the opposite approach, believing that Freemasonry in India—like British rule—required the wholehearted participation of Indians.[72] In this we see the genesis of the notion of Masonic imperial brotherhood, wherein a relationship of parity between Britons and Indians is seen as necessary to bolstering the Masonic "empire," and, by implication, the British Empire.

IV. THE CONQUEST OF SIND AND CHARLES NAPIER

Back in Sind, the British forced the Amirs into ceding Karachi to them in February 1839.[73] Nothing much happened in the further conquest of Sind, however, until the debacle of the first Afghan war, when Sir Charles Napier agreed with Lord Ellenborough to annex Sind completely, in part to restore British prestige. Indeed, Napier described the act as the "tail of the Afghan storm."[74] This "storm" had been marked at its beginning by the murder in Kabul, on 2 November 1841, of two founding members of the

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[72] See James Burnes' speech at Lodge *St. Andrews in the East* in mid-1844: "I gave my sanction to the measure [i.e., to open a lodge for the initation of Indians], not from feeling the force of representation, but also because I had expereinced the impossibility of maintaining Masonry with effect, exclusively from amidst a Society so circumscribed and so liable to constant fluctuation and change as the European portion of Bombay"—*Minutes of Lodge "St. Andrews in the East," No. 343, S.C.*, for 30 July 1844 (14th meeting). Courtesy of Mr. Larry Grant, Secretary.

[73] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 674: "On 7 February 1839, a 2-article 'agreement' for the surrender of Karachi was signed" between the British and the Amirs of Sind.

[74] The annexations of Sind and the Punjab after the Afghan War were necessitated not by the official reason to deal with an external enemy—indeed, "the new frontier was regarded as inevitable but undesirable"—but by the need to demonstrate "British power to the internal enemy" in the face of the humiliating defeat in Afghanistan. See Martin Yapp, *Strategies of British India*, 585. Yapp adds that the power of that enemy "was massively demonstrated in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the greatest crisis of British India, and the internal enemy continued in its aftermath to dominate considerations of British strategy."

Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India—Alexander Burnes (the British envoy) and his brother, Charles[75]—and had ended with the destruction of a British force numbering, along with camp followers, 12,000 to 15,000.[76] Napier, a "forwardist" and a Mason, sought to annex Sindh by any means necessary: "We have no right to seize Sind," he declared, "yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, humane and useful piece of rascality it will be!"[77] The conquest of Sind commenced in February 1843 and was completed in March. What had Napier meant by a "humane" piece of rascality? Could it be that he, like his fellow Mason James Burnes, believed that he could bring enlightenment to a benighted land, even if the means were questionable?

It is no coincidence that it was James Burnes who, in the wake of the humiliating defeat in which his brothers had perished, gave his full weight to the formation of the first lodge meant to initiate Indians in 1843. This was the *Masonic* consequence of the Afghan war, much as the annexation of Sind—executed by Napier—was its *political* consequence. Both the ideological basis for Sind's annexation and Lodge *Rising Star's* creation had been conceived by Burnes. While not a Mason when he first pushed for annexation, it is easy to see how both must have seemed to Burnes as contributing to the same end: the consolidation of the empire. It was perhaps no coincidence, therefore, that in October 1842 the first provisional warrant of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India was granted by Burnes, not for a lodge in Bombay, where the P.G.L. was

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75 James Burnes, *Notes on His Name and Family*, 41. Intriguingly, Alexander had been nominated the Governor Designate of the Bombay Presidency by Calcutta just prior to his murder—see A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 22. Had he occupied the office, he would have been the first regularly appointed Bombay Governor who was also a Freemason, and Bombay would have been governed politically and Masonically by the Burnes brothers.

76 George Buist, "Memoir of Sir Alexander Burnes," 2.

77 Charles Napier, quoted in Michael Barthrop, *The North-West Frontier, British India and Afghanistan: A Pictorial History, 1839-1947* (1982; Poole; New York; Sydney: New Orchard Editions, 1986), 42-43. Napier produced questionable but incriminating evidence accusing the Amirs of Sind of disloyalty to the British cause, and the Amirs were also deemed insubordinate for hesitating to sign fresh treaties with the British in November 1842. The Amirs were thus provoked into taking hostile action against the British, which became the excuse for a British response. See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 670-76.

headquartered, but for the formation of Lodge *Hope*, No. 337, S.C., at Karachi.[78] Napier, who had already been in Sind for a few years, was an honorary member of the lodge, and "took a lively interest in its proceedings."[79] As the governor of Sind, Napier was hard on the Amirs but, in a progressive Masonic spirit, "he tried to be just to the people, making short shrift of bribery and corruption, encouraging public works, setting up schools and introducing social reform."[80]

Recalling Napier's romantic imperialism, and his use of Masonic antiquarianism to establish an "additional bond of union" (see Chapter 6), one must ask, did its appeal work? In 1850, Shadad Khan, an "ex-Ameer of Scinde," either joined or was initiated in Lodge *True Friendship* in Calcutta,[81] and in 1856, Mir Ali Murad Talpur was initiated as a Freemason in London's Lodge *Royal York*, and "took great interest in Masonry."[82] Mir Ali Murad had rendered "most important services to the British Government at a most critical moment when all Sind and Afghanistan were in arms against the British; it was through His Highness remaining faithful to the British that the war in Sind was brought to

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[78] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 247.

[79] Ibid., 23. D.F. Wadia states that the lodge was founded by "the famous conqueror of Scinde, Lieutenant General Sir Charles Napier...,"—D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342 S.C.* (Bombay: British India Press, 1912), 15—but Finan names the founders and Napier is not among them. Napier was already in Sind prior to his conquest of it: in 1839 "he was transferred [from Poona] as commander of Sind" (more likely, of the newly acquired territory of Karachi)—Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 496.

[80] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 497.

[81] Dudley Wright, rev., *Gould's History of Freemasonry Throughout the World*, vol. 4, 226. Prince Keyralla Khan of Mysore (presumably a descendant of Tipu) was made a member of the same lodge in 1842. Shadad Khan is no doubt the same Shahdad who was the eldest son of the Amir Nur Muhammad and who was 22 years old when Alexander Burnes met him in 1837. Shahdad, Burnes said, "looks worn, and is said to be dissipated; he struck me as better educated than his father or uncles. He asked me what was the religion of China...." Burnes says that his grandfather was Mir Murad Ali—see Alexander Burnes, *Cabool*, 26-27.

[82] George Bease, "His Highness Meer Ally Morad Khan Bahadoor, Talpoor," in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 1 (April , 1870) (pp. 6-8): 8. Alexander Burnes in 1837 described Mir Ali Murad, then 25 years old, as "a clever sharp man, with some energy of character"—see Alexander Burnes, *Cabool*, 49. James Burnes, writing in 1828, mentions one "Meer Ali Mourad," son of Mir Thara of Mirpur, who was a distant relative of Murad Ali. Mir Ali Murad is described as "the most troublesome subject under the Sinde durbar," and as having some to the notice of the British and Cutch governments for offering refuge to cross-border plunderers. If this were the same Ali Murad mentioned by Alexander, he would have been only sixteen years old, which seems improbable. Even if James added an afternote, dating from 1831, Ali Murad would have been only nineteen years of age—see James Burnes, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Sinde*, 63, 72.

such a speedy end without any bloodshed in Upper Sind."[83] It is impossible to say whether or not the two ex-Amirs' first exposure to Freemasonry was through Napier, who might have been trying to reconcile the Amirs of Sind—at least their younger members—to British rule.

Napier seems to have wanted to bind his close aides to him through Freemasonry, as well. Prior to the ceremony for the Masonic temple in September 1845 (see Chapter 6), the Munshi to the Government of Sindh, Mirza Ali Akbar, arrived in Bombay to seek initiation in Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, which was then the only lodge in the Bombay Presidency authorized to initiate Indians.

> On this occasion, the privilege of a Freemason was conferred on a most worthy native gentleman, Meerza Ally Akbar, Khan Bahadoor, who has served with great distinction in Cabool and Scinde, and has been publicly noticed by the Governor-General of India, in a manner reflecting credit on him of no ordinary stamp. The prefix to his name, *Khan Bahadoor*, (meaning noble and brave) is a title conferred on him by that high authority, to mark the approbation with which government has regarded his valuable services; and he is now holding a prominent office under his excellency, Sir C. Napier.[84]

A later account describes him as an "accomplished Oriental and English scholar, the *confidential Interpreter* of the late Sir Charles Napier,"[85] which suggests that Mirza Ali Akbar was involved with sensitive areas like diplomacy, and hence with the Political Department. The Provincial Grand Master, James Burnes, gave *Rising Star* a special dispensation to speed up the balloting and initiation process, by allowing both steps to happen at one meeting.[86]

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[83] *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 1 (April , 1870): 7. Unfortunately, after having been giving estates as a reward, the British dispossessed him later on, when he was judged to have used fraud in a treaty. Believing himself ill-used by the British in India, Mir Ali Murad went to England to argue his case. Unfortunately, the Mutiny broke out in 1857, and he was advised to return to India with the promise that Parliament would consider his case. Nothing seems to have come of the matter, and this editorial by Bease, many years later, is a rare case (the only one I have encountered) of the Masonic press appealing to the Bombay Government and its Masonic Governor (Sir Seymour Fitzgerald) for justice on behalf of a fellow Mason and Indian prince.

[84] From Minutes of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India* for May 10, 1845; quoted in *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (second quarter issue: June-Sept., 1845), 2nd (new) series (London): 275.

[85] *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 1 (April , 1870): 7 (my italics).

[86] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 47. Due to Mirza Ali Akbar's schedule, the lodge even advanced its meeting date by five days. Moreover, at the meeting two visiting Masons from

V. FREEMASONRY, *JADOO*, AND IMPERIAL CONTROL

For all their emphasis on rational science and the elimination of superstition, the Victorians "took their Masonry very seriously [and].... invested it with a secrecy which printed rituals and a more balanced idea of what should be concealed has now made pointless."[87] British Freemasons in the non-European world played up Freemasonry's occultic side, as well, for what can only be seen as political reasons.

While in Kabul in the early 1830s, Alexander Burnes stayed with Nawab Jabar Khan, the brother of the Afghan ruler, Dost Muhammad. Burnes found the Nawab to be a polished gentleman who was keenly interested in medicine and alchemy, and learned from him the location of many metallic veins in the country. In return, the Nawab asked Burnes to reveal some of *his* knowledge. Intriguingly, the only knowledge Burnes thought sufficiently valuable to offer the Nawab was that of Freemasonry:

> I informed him that I belonged to a sect called Freemasons, and gave some account of the craft, *into which he requested to be admitted without delay*. But, as the number of the brethren must be equal to that of the Pleiades, we put it off to a convenient opportunity. He confidently believed that he had at last got scent of *a magic in its purest dye*; and had it been in my power, I would have willingly initiated him.[88]

Once again, a "Political" wishes to initiate a member of the ruling elite of a buffer state! But the Nawab, too, is anxious to join, apparently intrigued by and attracted to the Craft. This shows that the natives elites had their own reasons for wanting to join, although Burnes does not offer his readers an explanation other than the thaumaturgic one. This reflects a larger phenomenon, for the association of Freemasonry with magic was

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Sind, Lt. G.D. Byng, Aide-de Camp to Charles Napier, and Capt. St. Berry of H.M.'s 87th Regiment—both underlings of Napier—were in town to vouch for Mirza Ali Akbar's character. This suggests that Napier was anxious to induct his confidential interpreter into this "additional bond of union," and had sent the two officers to accompany him. Mirza Ali Akbar shows up again in a *Masonic Record* article in 1870 as an advocate pursuing the cause of the Sindhi Amir, Mir Ali Murad Talpur, in London—see George Bease, "His Highness Meer Ally Morad Khan Bahadoor, Talpoor," in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 1 (April , 1870): 7.

[87] A.C.F. Jackson, "Our Predecesors of about the time that Quatouor Coronati Lodge was founded," in *Ars Quatour Coronatorum* (Transactions of *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge, No. 2076), vol. 90 (for the year 1977; publ. 1978), 51. Quoted in Paul J. Rich, "Kim and the Magic House," 336n.

[88] Alexander Burnes, *Travels to Bokhara*, vol. 1, 161 (my italics).

ubiquitous throughout South Asia among those Indians who were not western-educated. A common vernacular name for a Masonic hall in India was *jadughar*, or "magic-house."[89] Another common term across North India and in Bombay was *bhutkhana*, or "demon-house."[90] G.L.F. Connell, the secretary of Lodge *Perseverance*, speaking of Freemasonry in Bombay during the 1840s, noted that it "is interesting to hear old Bombay describing the scene of the natives all crowding with open mouths, some from curiosity, some from fear at a gathering of the *Boothkhanawallas* on such an occasion as the laying of the foundation stone of a house."[91]

In Raj literature, Kimball O'Hara's patrimony to his son in Kipling's *Kim* were three certificates—two of which were Masonic (the third was the younger Kim's birth certificate)—which the father told the son never to part with, "for they belonged to a great piece of magic—such magic as men practised over yonder behind the Museum, in the big blue and white Jadoo-Gher—the Magic House, as we name the Masonic Lodge."[92] Perhaps, then, Alexander Burnes took for granted that Freemasonry had become insinuated into the superstitions of traditional South Asian society, and felt it unnecessary to comment on a native of the region looking on the Craft as *jadu*. Perhaps, though, Burnes *intentionally* explained Freemasonry in such a way as to suggest that Freemasons were men possessed of magical powers. The benefits of this for British "Politicals"—

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89 "The term commonly applied by natives to a Freemasons' Lodge, when there is one, at an English station. On the Bombay side it is also called *Shaitan khana* (see Burton's *Sind Revisited*),... In S. India the Lodge is called *Talai-vetta-Kovil*, 'Cut-head Temple,' because part of the rite of initiation is supposed to consist in the candidate's head being cut off and put on again"—Col. Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (Calcutta: Rupa and Co., 1990; 1886), 445. Likewise, and much more recently, Paul J. Rich mentions that a lodge in Bangkok which he attended "meets in what is called the 'ghost house'"—see his "Kim and the Magic House," 336n.

90 Although Urdu poets (such as Khwaja Mir Dard) have also used *butkhana*, to refer to a "shrine, temple where idols are kept"—Muhammad Abd-Al-Rahman Barker and Shah Abdus Salam, et al., *A Reader of Classical Urdu Poetry* (New York: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1977), vol. 3, 42 and vol. 1, 119 for its use by Dard.

91 G.L.F. Connell, on Lodge *Perseverance*, No. 351 (S.C.), in "History of Freemasonry in Western India" (serialized), in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 7 (October 1867): 252.

92 Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (New York: Airmont Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), 9.

often operating outside British Indian territory, and having to alternate between bluff and cajolery—would have been enormous.

The fact that the vernacular terms used by South Asians to refer to Masonic halls denoted magic, often black magic and devil-worship, demonstrates that South Asians who were not western-educated were at least suspicious of—more often frightened by—Masonic halls.[93] Even during 1857/58, mutineers were leery about damaging Masonic halls. At Kanpur, for example, a correspondent to the *Masonic Record* wrote in 1869 that

> ...the mutineers never touched the Lodge [i.e., Lodge *Harmony*] or property appertaining thereto. The "*Jadoo Ghur*"—(or Magic house, in Hindustanee) was never touched, save once, and then by an 18-pr. shot, from our own battery; thanks to *the dread inspired over the Native mind* the old Lodge Rooms stand, whilst nearby every other house was burned to the ground.[94]

One is compelled to conclude that the mass of South Asians saw Britons, when they were functioning as Masons in their Masonic halls, as either white-skinned magicians, demons, or satanists. This meant that British officials or "Politicals" who were Masons could convey the impression that they had more power at their disposal than military force alone. Many Indians had long ascribed supernatural powers to *sannyasis*, the spirit-possessed, witches, and other marginal people. It is not hard to conceive that the fearful rumors which surrounded Masonic halls would have allowed Freemasons to situate themselves—or agree to be situated—in such traditions.[95] One is reminded of the fortuitous discovery by Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnehan of the hold Freemasonry had over the Kafiris, in Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King." Kipling's fiction, though, may not have been as strange as fact, for to find that even Indian sepoys ascribed magical powers to Freemasonry and were in awe of its temples is impressive, and demonstrates

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[93] For a literary example, see ibid., 10: "If the woman had sent Kim up to the local Jadoo-Gher with those papers, he would, of course, have been taken over by the Provincial Grand Lodge and sent to the Masonic Orphanage in the Hills; *but what she had heard of magic she distrusted*" (my italics).

[94] Letter from "The Heart" to George Bease, editor, May 15, 1869; in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 3 (June 1869): 87 (my italics).

[95] Many reasons have been put forward to explain how a hundred thousand Britons controlled hundreds of millions of Indians. The common perception among Indians of Freemasonry as magic, though, has never been included in the list of explanations.

the potential of such a movement as an instrument for controlling the masses of the Indian Empire. The notion of Freemasonry as *jadu*, though, developed through a dialogic process: the British could not have promoted Freemasonry as a kind of magic unless South Asians already had a preconception of what the movement was, based on rumor.

Being closely associated with the Enlightenment, one might wonder how Freemasons could reconcile thaumaturgy with reason. First, the rumors of demonic magic were spread by non-Masons; Masons did not claim such power. In fact, they would have been very much against black magic. However, that they did not actively dissuade Indians from believing these rumors indicates that the British thought they might realize some political power from such misconceptions. Second, Freemasonry had a strong occult side in the 19th century, yet this was not seen as unscientific, for the boundaries of science and mysticism had not been delineated as clearly as they would be in the 20th century. Third, even in the early Enlightenment, a distinction had already been made between "natural magic" and witchcraft, with the former defined as the power which comes from a fuller understanding of nature, and not a perversion of natural laws.

According to Mary Ann Clawson, British gentlemen of the 17th and 18th centuries were attracted to the artisanal ideal of Freemasonry due to two tendencies in British society:

> first, the widespread European interest in magic and esoteric brotherhood that was a significant element of Renaissance science, and second, the more specifically British tradition of collaboration between gentlemen scientists and skilled artisans. In both the Baconianism of the seventeenth century and the Newtonianism of the eighteenth, British philosophy sought to link such collaborations to the progress of science and the well-being of the nation.[96]

In the world of Renaissance science, the boundaries between science and magic "had not yet been drawn," and the "distinctions between pseudo-sciences such as alchemy and astrology and 'genuine' sciences such as chemistry and mathematics not yet

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[96] Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 56.

recognized."[97] Moreover, magic and science are similar, says Clawson, in that, unlike religion, they both "attempt to understand the natural world so as to alter or control it."[98] When Renaissance scientists were attacked as magicians and witches, they responded, not by denying the charge altogether, but by defending science and mathematics as "good" magic. From this close association between Renaissance science and magic, says, Clawson, came "the interest in secret brotherhoods, including craft organizations, of which the Masonic lodges represented a variant. Craft associations were perceived as repositiories of esoteric knowledge...."[99] But this esoteric knowledge—the new sciences—were perceived to have both an angelic and a diabolical side, and this led to a concern that science "be developed within the context of a beneficient and reformed society where power would be used only for good. Thus the character of craft orders as moral organizations spoke to a concern that scientific work should only be undertaken within and by morally responsible communities committed to social betterment."[100] British Masonic imperialists, however, found it useful to maintain the aura of a diabolic magic, which Freemasonry had acquired among many South Asians, while at the same time seeing their mission as one which involved the spread of angelic magic.

VI. FREEMASONRY IN THE PRINCELY AND BUFFER STATES

Consolidation of British rule did not only mean an expansionist "forward" policy, but also conciliation—the judicious cultivation of the native aristocracy, and, in British India, a more general winning over of various elites and also, at times, the masses. Once annexed or subordinated to British India, the ruling elites of formerly sovereign states were also drawn by the British into Freemasonry, for the Craft inculcated the notions of progress, self-discipline, self-denial, and loyalty to the Crown—the very virtues the

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[97] Ibid., 57.
[98] Ibid., 58.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid., 59.

British tried to instill in the rulers of Princely India through their Political Residents: those members of the Foreign and Political Department (i.e., the "Politicals") who were posted to princely states. As a prelude to inculcating such values, though, the first duty of a Resident was "to cultivate direct, friendly, personal relations with the Ruling Princes and Chiefs with whom he works."[101] What better way to develop such relations than through the fraternal bond of Freemasonry so popular among the "Politicals"?[102] Freemasonry could both bind and educate; hence its utility in managing the princes was incalculable. How did the "Politicals" imagine the Craft achieving this end in practice, though?

The answer is given in a report on the status of Freemasonry in Panjab, by a correspondent to the *Masonic Record* styling himself "Punjaub," who wrote in 1875 of the consecration of a Masonic Hall in the princely state of Bhawalpur:

> It is curious to note that in the capital of a Mahomedan State we should find a Lodge; the time will come when the Nawab, attaining his majority, will have his State handed over to him. What will then become of this Lodge? Will it fall into abeyance, or, as I earnestly trust and hope, the Nawab seeing the good feeling and brotherly love which the Craft engenders in the hearts of all its votaries, will he join the Craft, and shall we see a Lodge not only in a Mahomedan State, but with the Nawab perhaps as its W.M. [i.e., Worshipful Master], surrounded by his nobles and advisers, European and Native, meeting and disseminating the one grand principle of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, which are the groundwork of our noble old Craft?[103]

The picture one gets is of a Resident closely watching over a prince in his minority and attracting him into the Craft as an adult, where the young ruler would perhaps continue to be guided by his European and "Native" advisors, bound to them all in Masonic brotherly love (recall the "first duty" of a Resident), his character reflecting probity ("Truth"), and

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[101] Notes from the *Manual of Instructions to Officers of the Foreign and Political Department*, 1924; quoted in Charles Allen, *Lives of the Indian Princes* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1985; 1984), 245.
[102] For a related study of Masonic "Politicals" in the Persian Gulf, see Paul J. Rich, *Invasions of the Gulf: Radicalism, Ritualism and the Shaikhs* (Cambridge: Allborough Press, 1991), about the Indian Political Service and the Arab shaikhdoms. In one chapter Rich explores the Masonic allegiances of I.P.S. officers in the late 19th and 20th centuries.
[103] "Punjaub" to George Bease; "Correspondence" section in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 11 (February 1875): 404.

his policies inspired by a desire to raise up the disadvantaged among his subjects ("Relief"). Even as the Master of the lodge, the prince would learn to consult with his courtiers and the "Politicals" rather than descend into autocracy. One cannot gainsay the nobility of such a vision, even if it also conduces to the consolidation of British rule, for implicit in this vision is social reform and good government in the native state. It would seem that in the late 19th century Masons were attempting to apply Moira's theory of societal reform through "Masonizing" the ruling elites of the princely states.

Various princely rulers in the Bombay Presidency and its environs became Masons.[104] For example, we read that in 1890 "Sir Jusvantsingjee Futtesingjee, K.C.I.E., the Thakore Sahib of Limbdi, was passed to the second degree."[105] And in March 1907 "H.H. the Jam Saheb joined Lodge *Kathiawar*, having been initiated in *Sir Isaac Newton Cambridge University* Lodge."[106] Since Masons considered Newton along with Bacon to be the epitomes of scientific enlightenment, for an Indian Prince to be initated in such a lodge in England must surely have established his "progressive" credentials with the British on his return to India! Indeed, the metropole was the site where British Masonic imperial brotherhood reached the highest level of parity, when Indian princes and British aristocrats and statesmen met in Lodge. For example, in 1897 the *Empire* Lodge in London held a dinner attended by the Earl of Lathorn, Lord Saltoun,[107] the Duke of Abercorn,[108] the Raja of Kapurthala (which showed that Masonry was passed down in

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[104] For some information on the same process in Panjab, see Dr. Roeinton Khambatta, "The District Grand Lodge of the Punjab," pp. 53-77 in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (Transactions of *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge, No. 2076), vol. 103 (for the year 1990; publ. 1991): 65. Khambatta states that the Sikh Maharaja, Bhupindra Singh, was "another distinguished freemason. He was the Founding Master of the Phulkian Lodge No. 3764 at Patiala [in Nov. 1916], a lodge which had two other Maharajas as founding members and a predominantly civilian and Indian membership. He was later to be a Past Junior Grand Warden of the United Grand Lodge of England and his son Maharaja Yadavendra Singh was the first District Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge of Northern India."

[105] K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 31.

[106] Ibid., 41. This is an example of a school lodge back in England which Paul Rich discusses.

[107] Alexander William Fraser (1851-1933), 18th Earl of Saltoun. See Edward Hall ("The Web Site of Edward Hall, for Genealogy and History.") "Timeline" page (for the Fraser family). April 19, 2000 <http://www.edhall.free-online.co.uk/fraser/timeline.htm>.

[108] James Hamilton (1838-1913), 2nd Duke of Abercorn (Ireland). He was the Grand Master of Ireland. His son, James Albert Hamilton (1869-1953), the 3rd Duke, became Governor of Ireland in 1922. See

that family[109]), and the Premiers of Natal, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and New Zealand. "The same year, Empire initiated the Raja of Khetri[110] and the son of the Raja of Shapura,[111] and in 1906 the Sultan of Johore, and fifteen years later, his son."[112] Obviously, this lodge served as an important meeting ground of empire.

There is not sufficient space to go into the establishment of Freemasonry in all these states, so a few examples will have to suffice.

A. Baroda:

Indian Masons could be found in the employ of both the Political Department and princely states. *Khan Bahadur* Kazi Shahabudin, C.I.E., was from a small princely state (Savant Wadi) in southern Maharashtra, and studied at Poona. Immediately upon finishing there, his abilities "attracted notice in high quarters and he was appointed head clerk at Bhooj, under Colonel Sir G. Le Grand Jacob, Political Agent of the Wadi State."[113] He was then made Secretary for a Council of Regency in Kutch, under the Political Agent, General Trevelyan. He apparently displayed such "tact and energy" during the Mutiny that the Education Department of Sind requested his services, but Trevelyan said he could not be spared. After some other jobs in Gujarat, the Rao of Kutch selected him in 1868 to become Divan. At this time, there were "strained relations" between the Rao and the Resident due to a dispute. Now Kazi Shahabudin had to switch sides, and he went to England to pursue the Rao's cause in the affair. While in England, he served as the honorary secretary to the "East India Association" for almost

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Edward Hall ("The Web Site of Edward Hall, for Genealogy and History"). "Descendants of Gilbert de Hamilton (Part 4)" page. April 19, 2000 <http://www.edhall.free-online.co.uk/word/hamilton4.htm>.

109 See Chapter 6 for an earlier Masonic Maharaja of Kapurthala, Randhir Singh.

110 Raja Ajit Singh of Khetri (c. 1864-1900). Intriguingly, two valuable letters of the Freemason and Hindu reformer, Viviekanda, to the Raja of Khetri (Jaipur district of Rajasthan) have recently been found. See "Vivekananda's Letters to Khetri King Discovered." *Rediff On the Net* 13 March 1999. May 8, 2000 <http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/mar/13viveka.htm>.

111 Umaid Singh, Raja Dhiraj of Shahpura (b 1876). Most of these men were in England for Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

112 Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire: The English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism* (London: Regency Press, 1989), 88.

113 C.B. Burrows, comp., *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 2nd ed. (Philadephia: The Historical Publishing Co., 1900), 160.

three years. This organization was closely associated with Freemasons (see Chapter 9). It is unclear when and where Shahabudin became a Mason, but he shows up at a meeting of the "Masonic Archæological Institute" in London on June 9, 1870, along with fellow Mason and political partner Dadabhai Naoroji.[114]

While pursuing the Rao's cause in London, Shahabudin was also a professor of Oriental languages at the University College in London for two years, and he testified before a Parliamentary Committee set up to deal with the financial condition of India.[115] Interestingly, in 1871-72 Dadabhai Naoroji also gave "most valuable and unimpeachable evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on the finances of India,"[116] which means that Shahabudin and Naoroji were working together in both politics and Freemasonry. And in 1874, we read in the *Masonic Record* that "Kazee Shahboodin, ex-Dewan of Kutch, has taken charge of the Revenue Department at Baroda,"[117] one of the three great princely states of India, along with Hyderabad and Kashmir. The same year, Naoroji accepted an offer from Malhar Rao, the spendthrift and incompetent Gaekwar of Baroda, to become the Divan,[118] which meant that Shahabudin became Naoroji's assistant. Naoroji's presence was not appreciated by the Resident, Robert Phayre, but it was differences between Naoroji and Malhar Rao himself which caused Naoroji to resign within the year.[119] But the reformist Sayaji Rao Gaekwar appointed Shahabudin to be his Divan in 1881—a post he held until July, 1886, when ill-health compelled him to resign.

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[114] See *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 5 (August 1870): 171—The subject of the meeting that night was about a new system of Masonry among Muslims. "Bro. Khan Bahadoor Kazi Shahbadun Ibrahim, Dewan of H.H. the Rao of Kutch" attended (also present was another Indian Mason—Jamshedjee Jivanjee Gazdar), and during the meeting Shahabudin "entered into some details as to the principles of Islam and the present movement in India for purifying it from superstitious practices." It is unclear whether he was referring to the Aligarh movement or the Deoband movement, but clearly Shahabudin was an advocate of Islamic reformism. Purifying religions of "superstition" was also part of the Masonic agenda, as was seen in a previous chapter.

[115] C.B. Burrows, comp., *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 160.

[116] Ibid., 109.

[117] "General Intelligence" for March 1874, in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 1 (April 1874): 21.

[118] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 251, 494. Malhar Rao was facing deposition by the British for his misrule, and the choice of Naoroji was a last ditch attempt to show that he was interested in reforming the government.

[119] Ibid., 252. Malhar Rao was arrested in January 1875 for allegedly trying to poison Phayre, and was eventually deposed.

A few months later, the Governor of Bombay, Lord Reay, appointed him to his Legislative Council, and the Viceroy later made him a member of the Public Service Commission.[120]

Before he left, Shahabudin would have witnessed the founding, on April 22, 1886, of Lodge *Tyrrell Leith*, No. 2162, E.C.[121] Members included Prince Fatehsinh Sayajirao Gaekwad and Prince Dhairyasinhrao Sayajirao Gaekwad, the eldest and youngest sons, respectively, of Sayajirao Gaekwad; and Sampatrao K. Gaekwad, Sayajirao's brother.[122] Another early member was the Chief Justice of Baroda, Abbas S. Tyabji, a brother to Badruddin Tyabji, and a member of the Congress. A brother of the Maharaja was Master in 1905; a Divan, Sir Manubhai N. Mehta, became the lodge's Master in 1918; and a prince of the Gaekwad family was Master in 1924.[123]

Two things become apparent in the case of Shahabudin: Indians who were Masons and associated with the Political Department could switch sides and serve their Indian princely masters against particular British "Politicals" (as in the case of Kutch); and the reformism and progressive quality of Baroda that marked Sayajirao Gaekwad's rule may have been inspired in part, or at least facilitated by Freemasonry, for Sayajirao's sons, brother, and important members of the government were Masons. There also seems to have been a link between this lodge and the early Congress, through such men as Abbas Tyabji.

B. Hyderabad:

The foremost princely state in British India was Hyderabad. Under its Muslim ruler, the Nizam, Hyderabad became an important supporter of Muslim causes in the subcontinent and often recruited its civil servants from Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. As in Baroda, Masonry had insinuated

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[120] C.B. Burrows, comp., *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 160.

[121] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 65. The lodge was named after the District Grand Master of Bombay at the time.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 66-67.

itself into the bureaucracy of Hyderabad and Freemasonry was to be found among the upper-echelons of the state.[124] Lodge *Hyderabad* (est. 1892), in Hyderabad City, for example, included a "Prime Minister, a Noble of the State[, and] a prominent businessman...." Lt. Col. Sir Terence H. Keyes, the Resident of Hyderabad State in the 1930s, was also a member, as was Sardar Muhammad Umar Khan, son of Abdur Rahman Khan, King of Afghanistan.[125] Sometimes "the high dignitaries used to invite the members of the Lodge at their Palaces for dinner after the meetings."[126] The lodge "had been founded in 1893 [*sic*] with the idea of conferring the degrees in Urdu and with this in view the ritual had been very carefully translated by Rt. Wor. Bro. [S.M.] Moinuddien."[127] Lodge *Deccan*, No. 1444, E.C., Hyderabad (est. 1873), had on its rolls a number of the Nizam's officers, as well.[128] Lodge *Morland*, another Hyderabad lodge, in the mid-1890s had among its members, Bakshi Raghunath Prasad (by 1910 a judge of the Nizam's High Court), and the Assistant Inspector-General of the Nizam's District Police, A.G. Fellows.[129] And the Resident, Sir Terrance H. Keyes, was Master of Lodge *Ekram*, No. 756 S.C. (est. 1888), in nearby Secunderabad in 1931.[130]

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[124] Freemasonry in Hyderabad was governed by the District Grand Lodge of Bombay and Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India (G.L..A.S.F.I.), so, in Masonic terms, Hyderabad was an extension of Bombay.

[125] See G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 82. Unfortunately, Gupta does identify the prime minister, and noble mentioned above.

[126] Ibid., ch. 4, 83.

[127] J.D.B. Gribble, *History of Freemasonry in Hyderabad* (Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1910), 223. Because Lodge *Hyderabad* worked its ritual in Urdu, we read, for example, of one M. Mahomed Ali, who spoke no English, and so was recommended to join there instead of at Lodge *Morland* (222).

[128] See G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 42-45 (esp. 44): "Several officers of H.E.H. The Nizam's Government were members of the Lodge and took active interest in its work. It would appear that Bro. Nawab Syed Hussain Imed-ul-Mulk, Member of the Nizam's Executive Council, was thrice Master of the Lodge."

[129] J.D.B. Gribble, *History of Freemasonry in Hyderabad*, 218. Fellows was elected Master of the lodge in December 1896.

[130] See G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 67-69. The lodge, situated first in Gulbarga, took its name from its Founder Member and first Master, Nawab Ekramullah Khan, who carried the title "Nawab Yar Jung," which seems to indicate that he was either related to the Nizam or held high office in his domains. Urdu was sometimes used in the lodge ritual.

The most important positions in the Craft in Hyderabad were generally occupied by Britons, which meant that their role in Freemasonry mirrored their role in the Government of India's relations with the princely states.

We can get some idea of what character traits and virtues British Masons expected of their princely state counterparts in J.D.B. Gribble's[131] praise of S.M. Moinuddien, who had helped save Lodge *Morland*:

> This worthy Brother's name has for the last seven years been very prominent in the Lodge [i.e., *Morland*]. He worked his way steadily through all the degrees, and throughout all the troubles was a staunch supporter of the Lodge without being a partizan [sic]. *Punctual* in attendance, *prompt* in his payments and full of Masonic *zeal*, he forms an admirable example of a worthy Mason. He has also taken the highest honours in the Royal Arch and the Secret Monitor and with Rt. Wor. Bro. Bakshi Raghunath Prasad forms a mainstay of Hyderabad Masonry."[132]

In a telling statement which parallels "official" British attitudes towards Indians' abilities to share power in the government of India, Gribble, despite his admiration for his Indian "brothers" such as Moinuddien and Prasad, generally believes that Indian Masons (at least in Hyderabad) are not yet able to manage Masonic administrative matters on their own:

> With the experience which the writer has now gained, *he would certainly not again advocate the formation of a Lodge to consist exclusively of Indian brethren.* The ritual and discipline *is apt to get lax*, and the *attendance is very uncertain.* A *certain amount of European element appears to be necessary* in order to keep the Lodge up to *a high standard of efficency.*[133]

However, at the same time, the writer "does not wish to be understood as casting any reflection upon Hindu, Mahomedan or Parsee brethren, amongst whom there are many bright Masonic examples, as will be seen from this record...."[134] It is a paternalistic view, not unlike the paternalism of Raj officialdom towards Indians generally. Both

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[131] In mid-1896 Gribble had been ordered by the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, at Bombay, to take control of the lodge, which had fallen on hard times, until a new Master could be elected in December—see Gribble, 218.

[132] J.D.B. Gribble, *History of Freemasonry in Hyderabad*, 220n (my italics).

[133] Ibid., 223 (my italics).

[134] Ibid.

views are self-serving, for they justify the need for a "certain amount of European element," whether in running the Lodge or the Raj. Of course, this is one Masonic administrator's view. Others, such as Frank Beaman of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, felt differently (see below).

C. Kashmir:

A similar situation to Hyderabad and Baroda obtained in the Masonic community of Kashmir, where Lodge *Takht-i-Suleiman*, No. 2043, E.C., was established in Srinagar in 1904. Among its members, mostly British, "there have been heads of Departments, like forests, Engineering, Medical, Police, etc."[135] However, in 1920, the Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir was initiated in the lodge. The Maharaja served as the lodge's master in 1924-25, as the District Grand Senior Warden in 1935-36. In 1906, the lodge initiated *Rai Sahib* Divan Amar Nath, Kashmir's Home Minister. In 1913, the Revenue Minister, *Khan Bahadur* Sheikh Makbul Hussain, joined from another lodge, and in 1920, another Home Minister, *Khan Bahadur* Nawab Maula Bukhsh, joined from Lodge *Himalayan Brotherhood* at Simla—a popular lodge among imperial officials. In 1921, the Commander-in-Chief of the Kashmir Army, General Janak Singh, was initiated as well.[136] What this shows is that in the early 20th century, Lodge *Takht-i-Suleiman* was the lodge of the government of Kashmir, including in its ranks British administrators seconded to the princely state of Kashmir and important members of the court, from the Maharaja on down. Indirect British rule was strengthened through these fraternal ties between the British and the elites of the princely states.

D. Afghanistan:

Not a princely state, but actually a buffer state, Afghanistan was nevertheless less free of British control than Persia, for from the early 19th century Afghanistan was deemed crucial to the security of India in the northwest, and so the British interefered

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[135] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 102. Note the Islamicate reference to the "Throne of Solomon," which is the name for the Master's chair in a lodge.
[136] Ibid., 102-03.

with its affairs much more than it did with Persia. Therefore, Afghanistan occupied a middle ground between a subordinated princely state and a completely independent buffer state.

Once the British in India recognized that their ability to fully control Afghanistan was limited British "Politicals" and other important members of the Raj endeavored with some success to induct Afghan ruling elites into the Craft. For example, on February 2, 1907, Habibullah Khan, the Amir of Afghanistan (1869-1919) who ruled from 1901 until his assassination in 1919, received all three degrees in one night (something usually discouraged in the British Constitutions) in Lodge *Concordia*, No. 3102, E.C., at the Freemasons' Hall in Calcutta "in the presence of the District Grand Master for the Punjab,... Lord Kitchener, who took part in the ceremonies."[137]

According to another account, it was the famous "Political," and "keen freemason,"[138] Arthur Henry McMahon (1862-1949), who "enrolled" Habibullah as a Mason, which probably indicates that he was also at the initiation in Calcutta.[139]

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[137] G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India: A Study in Resolved Discords," in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (Transactions of *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge, No. 2076), vol. 92 (for the year 1979; publ. 1980): 190. The Qur'an on which Habibullah took his sacred obligations, which is now in the museum of the Grand Lodge of England, carries his signature after an inscription which reads: "In the City of Calcutta in the month of February 1907 on this Holy Book the Koran I made an asservation [*sic*, asseveration]." Habibullah was certain not the first of his family to become a Mason. For example, in 1874, J.C. Parkinson, the Deputy Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Middlesex, stated in a speech that "a few months ago at his lodge in Middlesex he had the pleasure of initiating a Mohamedan in the person of an Affghan prince of the blood, who had since passed the other degrees under circumstances of peculiar interest"—Minutes of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire, for October 6, 1874, in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 8 (November 1874): 315. Unfortunately, Parkinson did not say who this prince was or what those circumstances were, although from what we have seen, it would not be far-fetched to conclude that the prince's sponsor was associated with either the Foreign Ministry or the India Office.

[138] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 419.

[139] See ibid.: "A keen freemason, McMahon founded a chapter in 1908 at Quetta, and enrolled Amir Habibullah as a member when the latter visited India. In addition to founding several lodges in this country, on his return to England he rose to be grand senior warden of the Grand Lodge of England, grand commander of the Temple and sovereign grand commander of the Supreme Council 33 degree." At the turn of the century, McMahon was an active Mason in North India. For example, in 1908, he held the offices of Past Master of Lodge *Bolan*, No. 691, S.C. (Quetta), Master of Lodge *McMahon*, No. 3262, E.C. (Quetta), Grand Superintendent of All Scottish Freemasonry (for Northern India), District Grand Senior Warden of Punjab (English Constitution), among others—see Wan Jamiat Rai, *A Brief History of Freemasonry in Quetta* (Bombay: Times Press, 1908), ii-iii. Like Alexander Burnes before him, he was a fellow of the Royal Geographical and Geological Societies, and Chairman of the Fellowship of the British Empire (exhibit in the 1920s? Mehra is not clear here).

Strangely, Habibullah was "pronouncedly anti-British. The result was that relations with the Indian government were strained during his reign and in varying degrees."[140] A.H. McMahon, though, during his service as a key negotiator in the Seistan boundary negotiations between Persia and Afghanistan in 1903-05, "struck a lifelong friendship with Amir Habibullah... which, extending to the Amir's two successors, helped to stabilize a difficult relationship between Delhi and Kabul."[141] Another member of the ruling family of Afghanistan, Sardar Muhammad Usman Khan, a son of Abdur Rahman Khan (and therefore a brother or half-brother to Habibullah), was initiated in Lodge *Bolan* in Quetta on March 2, 1908, when McMahon was Master of that lodge.[142] Despite his friendship with McMahon, Habibullah was greatly upset with a later Anglo-Russian Convention over Seistan on which he had not been consulted. This caused a clash with the British in 1907 (the same year Habibullah became a Mason in Calcutta!). His displeasure "manifested itself, if partly, in the Afridi and Mohmand uprisings on the North West Frontier in 1908."[143]

In his "profane" life McMahon was at the time "[Political] Agent to the Governor-General and Chief Commissioner in Baluchistan."[144] Lodge *Bolan* (est. 1883) had, by

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[140] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 278. The first clash came when Habibullah wanted to renew certain treaties with the British which the Viceroy, Curzon, argued had been personal treaties with the Amir's predecessor. There is no evidence that Curzon was a Mason (if he had been, the Masons of India would surely have trumpeted having another Viceroy in their ranks). When Curzon was on leave in Britain in 1904, his temporary replacement, Lord Ampthill—who was Governor of Madras *and* the District Grand Master of Madras (E.C.) at the turn of the century—immediately sent a diplomatic mission to Kabul which resulted in a new treaty reaffirming an annual subsidy to Habibullah, and recognizing him as an independent ruler, "albeit with the British retaining control over his country's foreign relations" (Parshotam Mehra, 279). In the negotiations, Habibullah resisted being drawn too closely into the British orbit by refusing to grant the British trade concessions or to allow them to introduce railways into Afghanistan. The treaty was an Afghan diplomatic victory and enhanced Habibullah's prestige among his people. For Ampthill's Masonic title, see the dedication to Lord Ampthill listing his Masonic and "profane" offices in Alexander Greenlaw, *Masonic Lectures Delivered in Open Lodge, Chapter, etc.* (reprint) (Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1905; orig. publ. Madras, 1870).

[141] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 418.

[142] See Wan Jamiat Rai, *A Brief History of Freemasonry in Quetta*, 25. See also G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 82—where "Sardar Mohammed Omar Khan, son of His Majesty Abdur Rahman Khan, King of Afghanistan" is listed as a member of Lodge *Hyderabad*, No. 787 S.C., in Hyderabad State.

[143] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 279.

[144] Wan Jamiat Rai, *A Brief History of Freemasonry in Quetta*, 21.

1908, a racially diverse membership: out of its one hundred members, twenty-seven were Indians—Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Parsis[145]—which suggests yet again that "Politicals" like McMahon saw the active recruitment of Indians and buffer state elites into the Masonic fraternity as extremely useful to the Empire.

E. Analysis:

Why did leaders of Indian princely states or those of buffer states join the Lodge? They have left us almost nothing in writing to explain their decision to join the Craft, so we are left to infer reasons, based on their actions.

Regarding Afghanistan, how effective was the "mystic tie" in achieving the imperial objective of stabilizing the Northwest Frontier and bringing Afghanistan under British overlordship? In the case of Habibullah, British "Political" and officials who were Masons were no doubt glad to have an important ruler on their frontier bound to them as a "brother," but given Habibullah's attitude towards the British, it is hard to conclude if *any* political goals were achieved by making him a Mason. Yet, while Habibullah obviously did not interpret his initiation into Freemasonry as a surrender to the British, personal Masonic ties seem to have transcended serious political differences Habibullah had with the British and kept open informal lines of communication. For, despite his anti-British stance, Freemasonry created personal and long-lasting ties with British imperial officials like McMahon—ties which, in turn, "stabilized" the relationship between Kabul and Delhi, to use Mehra's word. But stable relations are not the same as subservient relations—so Freemasonry was not so effective a tool in controlling neighboring states. Of course, it is difficult to conclude, given the dearth of evidence, that British Masons hoped the Craft would be a tool of imperial control in such cases, or merely a back-channel for communication and to foster at least some degree of fraternal connection. If the later, they may have been somewhat successful: during the First

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145 See ibid., 36-38.

World War, when a Turko-German mission arrived at Kabul to seek an alliance with Habibullah, he flatly turned them down.[146]

We do not know why Habibullah became a Mason. Perhaps he was struck by Freemasonry's idealism and progressive spirit (indeed, his reformist agenda neatly meshed with Masonic ideas of enlightenment and progress, especially in the area of education[147]). Perhaps he believed it would give him intimate access to those imperial officials, like Ampthill and Kitchener. Negotiating with a "brother" must have been psychologically different for both parties than the psychology which attends normal diplomacy, where the negotiators are not ritually bound to one another. Interestingly, Habibullah's first major clash with the British was with Curzon, who was not a Mason. Two Masons with whom he was involved, both Masonically and politically, were also opponents of Curzon: in dealing with Afghanistan and Habibullah, Ampthill had circumvented Curzon, and Kitchener had his own clashes with Curzon over the status of the Commander-in-Chief for India which ultimately led to Curzon's resignation in 1905.[148] This is not to say that the principle of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" was what prompted Habibullah to become a Freemason, but it is a strange coincidence, and a search for allies amongst the upper echelons of the Raj might have played some role in Habibullah's decision to become initiated.

As for the efficacy of Freemasonry in binding the *Indian* princes more closely to the British, this is hard to determine. It would be a neat fit, for example, to find princely rulers who were Freemasons before 1857 helping the British during the Mutiny. But we don't find this: princely helpers of the British during the Mutiny only became

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[146] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 279.

[147] See ibid., 278: "His measures in the field of education, public health, industry and trade, though limited in scope, were of great significance; they assisted in the growth of an urban population and the rise of a small Afghan bourgeoisie. In fact, his reign was witness to the emergence of the first educated and politically conscious Afghan generation, the *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* [a newspaper managed by Mahmud Beg Tarzi, under Habibullah's sponsorship] generation, that contributed signally to the future course of Afghan development." Masons could not have asked for a better example of a Masonic ruler putting his Masonic ideology into practice!

[148] See ibid., 171-72.

Freemasons *after* rendering their greatest service (although Mir Ali Murad of Sindh became a Mason just before the Mutiny, but *after* helping Napier in Sind, and after losing his lands in a British court of law. Did he hope that Masonic affiliation would improve his chances to regain his lands, or was he truly attracted to Masonic ideals, or both?). The Sikh Maharaja of Kapurthala, Randhir Singh, also lost most of his large kingdom to the British as a result of the Anglo-Sikh war of 1845, nevertheless, he, his brother, and their troops fought on the British side in 1857. In spite of this, he did not regain his old territories and instead was merely given zamindari rights to large tracts of land in the United Provinces.[149] Nevertheless, he, too, for reasons known only to him, chose to become a "brother" to the British in 1861 (see Chapter 6).

Another case was that of Dalip Singh (1838-93), a son of the Sikh king, Ranjit Singh, and a favorite of Queen Victoria. He converted to Christianity at the age of sixteen and spent most of his life in England. During a brief trip to India in 1861 to visit his mother, Dalip Singh was initiated into Freemasonry in Lodge *Star in the East* in Calcutta on March 13.[150] However in the 1880s he grew disenchanted with British rule in India, which had kept him from his legacy—the estates of his father—and in 1887 he intrigued with the Tsar's government to help the Russians wrest India from the British (Dalip Singh actually stayed in Russia from April 1887 to October 1888).[151] From

[149] See Charles Allen, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, 83-84.

[150] See "Masonic Landmarks in Bengal" in *Bengal Freemasons' Almanac*; reprinted in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 4 (July 1869): 148. See also *Masonic Record for Western India*, vol. 2, no. 6: 238, where Hugh Sandeman, the District Grand Master responsible for Dalip Singh's initiation—despite the existence of Bengal's By-Law 55 against initiating Asiatics, which Sandeman supported—defends his action, saying that Dalip Singh and the Maharaja of Kapurthala were "professing Christians, and were at once an ornament to their own race and to the Order of Freemasons."

[151] "In Russia he was supported by the leader of the anti-British party and newspaper editor Katkoff, and met Jemal al-Din al-Afghani, an agent dedicated to the pan-Islamic anti-colonial movement. The maharaja was thus at the centre of a web that included Sikhs, Irish republicans, Russian, Afghans and Egyptian agents. With them he created a master plan in which a combined Russo-Afghan force would invade India, precipitating revolts by the Sikh regiments and mutinies amongst the Irish. The surviving Sikh rajas would join them while the Bengalis sabotaged the railway system. Meanwhile, Egyptian nationalists would cut the Suez canal.... Dalip was perhaps the first Indian nationalist to attempt to reconcile the different interests of the princes, non-princely India and Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus. His attempt to build up an anti-colonial alliance showed an awareness of the need to organize internationally...."—see "Maharaja Dalip Singh"; May 16, 2001 <http://www.sikh-info.com/dalip.htm>.

Geneva in 1889, he issued an open proclamation to his "'beloved fellow countrymen'" in India to rally to his cause, describing himself as "'Sovereign of the Sikh Nation,'" and an "'implaccable foe of the British Government.'" He also announced his reconversion to the Sikh faith, yet, there is no indication that Dalip Singh ever renounced Freemasonry. In the end, his insurrectionary attempt flopped, and he sought the forgiveness of his Queen (and Patron of the Craft), which was granted.[152] Clearly, Freemasonry had not prevented this prince from rebelling against the British.

Timing may have had as much to do with British attitudes towards recruitment of the Indian aristocracy and princes into Freemasonry. Before the Mutiny, the British saw the Indian aristocracy largely as a relic of the past which could not long survive in modern times. After 1858, the British, now ever fearful lest the Mutiny break out again, came to believe that by binding such "natural rulers" to the Raj, the masses of Indians would follow. Modernization was carried out more effectively, although the British were more more sensitive towards the semblance of tradition.[153] Freemasonry would have been seen as important instrument for ensuring that in any similar rising by, say, the sepoys, Masonic native princes would be reliable supporters of the empire.

The examples of Sind, Afghanistan, and Persia reveal a fascinating intertwining of Freemasonry and British imperial and commercial interests.[154] Space does not permit an examination of the connection between Freemasonry and British political involvement in the Persian Gulf, Egypt, and Turkey, but these have been explored to some extent by other authors.[155] The recruitment of Indian princes into the Craft is a somewhat different

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152 See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History*, 179-181.

153 For the accelerated modernization of the land after the Mutiny, see Ian Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Princes: Paramountcy in British India, 1857-1930* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1982), 121-22. Unlike the past, the British tried to get traditional elites to become modern gentlemen, too, even setting up Mayo College in Ajmer to give the princes of India a western-education and train them in the principles of good government.

154 Many of the treaties with the Amirs of Sind and the Afghans, for example, had to do with commerce and free passage for Indian subjects for commercial purposes.

155 Besides, for example, Paul J. Rich, *Invasions of the Gulf*, and Hamid Algar, "An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran"; see Elie Kedouri, "Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 7, no.1 (January 1971): 89-104; and recently, Thierry Zarcone of the Centre National de la

story (because of their subsidiary alliances), but I believe it supports Martin Yapp's thesis regarding the Anglo-Indian concern for consolidating the empire and carries it past the period of his study into the 20th century.

One reason why Indian princes might have chosen to enter Freemasonry was for the possibility of intimate access to the British rulers (even access to the British royal family) and the hope of a relationship of rough parity with them. Thus, the lodge would have provided them with a corrective (if only temporary) to the paramountcy of the British which existed in the "profane" world. The only evidence for this comes from the first Indian prince to become a Mason, the Nawab of Arcot, Umdat ul-Umara. Although he was in a subsidiary alliance with the British in the late 18th century (at a time when British control over the subcontinent was still tenuous), he had not been completely "defanged" (as later Indian princes would be) and appears to have later collaborated with Tipu Sultan. Thus, in some ways he was more like a Habibullah in Afghanistan than a Randhir Singh in Kapurthala. In Chapter 2, we saw what Umdat's views were regarding the British and his relations with the "British nation"—as well as Freemasonry's influence on these relations. Of the latter, he said: "it is at once a cement of friendship between your nation and me...."[156] There is a sense of parity in this statement, so, at least where Britain was concerned, Freemasonry was part of Umdat's foreign policy (although I am not arguing that this was his *only* motivation in becoming a Mason).

Recherche Scientifique (Paris) has been doing work on Freemasonry and related trends in Muslim Reformism in the Turko-Persian Area (my thanks to Barbara Metcalf for bringing this to my attention). According to the Algar article, a number of Iranian historians have "regarded freemasonry as an instrument whereby foreign powers, above all Britain, have enslaved leading Iranian politicians and obliged them to do their will" (277). Algar also has an article entitled "Participation by Iranian Diplomats in the Masonic Lodges of Istanbul," pp. 33-44 in Thierry Zarcone and F. Zarrinebaf-Shahr, eds., *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul* (Tehran, Istanbul, Paris: IFEA-IFRI, 1994). See also, *Masonic Record for Western* India, vol. 6, no. 2 (May 1869): 77-78, for the minutes for February 29, 1869 of the *Oriental Lodge*, No. 687, E.C., Constantinople, where there is an account of a visit from Halim Pasha, who had been made the District Grand Master for Egypt by Lord Zetland. Halim Pasha's speech is interesting and discusses Freemasonry's role in the advancement of society and the civic duties it inculcates. In ibid., vol. 6, no. 8 (Nov. 1869): 282-83, Halim Pasha's speech at a French lodge in Constantinople, *L'Union d'Orient*, includes why he became a Freemason and Masonry's connection with progress, good government, new ideas, etc.

[156] Umdat ul-Umara, Nawab of Arcot, to Duke of Manchester, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, September 29, 1778; quoted in Dudley Wright, revised, *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, vol. 4. 216.

Umdat's letter shows how complex Freemasonry was, and—looking at it from the perspective of the British rulers of India—it shows how seamlessly Freemasonry meshed with British imperialism, both ennobling and enabling it, and in turn being politicized by it. I say "enabling" because Freemasonry, by its mystical and antiquarian teachings, its ritual drama, and its enlightenment worldview, lent a moral justification to British imperialism. Freemasonry also enabled imperialism by making it easier for the colonizer to draw the colonized "Other" into the bonds of ritual brotherhood, as Napier's statement about an "additional bond of union" suggests (see Chapter 6).

VII. POLICIES TOWARDS INDIANS AND THE ILBERT BILL(S)

Perhaps no event in the history of the British Raj aside from the Mutiny was as fateful in determining the destiny of the British Empire in India as the Ilbert Bill controversy. The bill, which would have allowed Indian judges to try European subjects in the *mofussil*, that is, in the rural localities and country stations, involved by far "the most momentous clash of ideologies in British India," according to Thomas Metcalf. It was a clash between the "contending views of the nature of the Raj that cut to the core of the British justification for their presence in India. In the course of this controversy,... the British were forced as never before to choose between fundamental principles of governance."[157] On one side were the liberal notions of equality before the law and the power of education to spur progress among Indians; on the other stood those Europeans who appealed to the essential difference of race. "One was a vision of eventual 'sameness', the other of enduring 'difference'."[158] Yet, this controversy has a Masonic context, for the viceroy who supported the Ilbert Bill was none other than Lord Ripon (r.

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[157] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*. The New Cambridge History of India, III.4. (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 203.
[158] Ibid., 204.

1880-84),[159] the erstwhile Deputy-Grand Master, then Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England when the Grand Lodge faced its own "Ilbert Bill" controversy a generation earlier over the District Grand Lodge of Bengal's attempt to keep Indians out of Freemasonry (see Chapter 3).

A. Lord Ripon, Grand Master:

Ripon, who had been installed as the Grand Master Mason of the English Constitution in 1870, upon the retirement of the Earl of Zetland from that office, had been Zetland's deputy for nine years prior to this.[160] Despite his Cabinet duties, Ripon took his job as Deputy Grand Master seriously.[161] On one occasion in 1865, Lord Zetland apologized for his deputy's absence from a Grand Lodge festival, "on account of a great

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159 George Frederick Samuel Robinson, Earl and Marquess of Ripon (1827-1909). Ripon "was undersecretary for war in 1859-61 and for India in 1861-63, became Lord Palmerston's secretary for war in 1863, and in 1866 was appointed secretary of state for India....

"Lord Ripon succeeded Lord Lytton as viceroy of India in April 1880 on Gladstone's return to power. Reversing some policies of his predecessor, he ended the Second Afghan War by recognizing 'Abdor Rahman Khan as emir of Afghanistan and evacuating the Indo-British expeditionary forces from that country in 1881. He liberalized India's internal administration, lowered the salt tax, expanded powers of local elected governments, and tried unsuccessfully to stabilize land taxes. Repealing the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, he allowed local language newspapers equal freedoms with those in English. In 1881 he passed an act providing for some minor improvements in labour conditions....

"Lord Ripon became first lord of the Admiralty (1886) in the third Gladstone ministry, and on the return of the Liberals to power he was appointed secretary for colonies (1892-95). In 1905-08 he was lord privy seal and Liberal leader in the House of Lords"—"Ripon, George Frederick Samuel Robinson, 1st Marquess of, 2nd Earl of Ripon, Viscount Goderich of Nocton," Encyclopædia Britannica Online. October 4, 1999 <http://www.eb.com:180/bol/topic?idxref=486322>.

160 *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 4 (July 1870): 141. Ripon was initiated in May 1853; he was appointed by the then-Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland, to be Senior Grand Warden of England in 1856, and Deputy Grand Master in Apil 1861, upon the retirement of Lord Dalhousie from that office—see also *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 2 (May 1870): 49-50. Upon his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1874, Ripon felt obliged to resign from Freemasonry altogether, and the Prince of Wales was elected Grand Master in his place. Theoretically, Ripon would have continued to be a Mason even though he had resigned from the Craft, for from the Masonic point of view—which held that initiation made a man a Freemason "to the end of his days"—by retiring from Freemasonry Masons "do not sever themselves from the Craft, but only discontinue any benefit that might accrue to them,... whilst their relation to the order, and every brother Mason remains unchanged."—"Indelibility of Freemasonry," in *Freemasons' Magazine*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 3 (June 1867): 97.

161 See "The Grand Master-Elect of England," in *The (London) Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 2 (May 1870): 49—"The office of Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England is not a dignity to be played with, neither can its duties and responsibilities be ignored.... [H]e must... be a man of administrative ability, willing to devote his time to the interests of the Order, liberal in his support of the Masonic Charities, and, though last not least, a firm but urbane president at the General Assemblies of the Craft. The Grand Master-elect possesses all these qualifications in an eminent degree...." The article also says that Ripon acted "long" and "efficiently" as Lord Zetland's deputy (50).

pressure of business at the War Office," and added: "'No Cabinet Minister ever devoted so much time to Masonry as Earl de Grey and Ripon.'"[162] Thus, Ripon was praised for being an active and efficient Deputy Grand Master precisely during the period (beginning in 1865) that the Bengal Freemasons under the leadership of District Grand Master Hugh Sandeman sought to undo Zetland's decree that Hindus could not be kept out of the Craft. Furthermore, it was in 1872, during Ripon's career as Grand Master, that the Bengal Freemasons (and with them the Masons of Western India) finally realized that their stubbornness in relation to the position of the Grand Lodge was untenable, and allowed Prosonno Coomar Dutt, and Hindus generally, to enter Freemasonry (see Chapter 3).

The Ilbert Bill not only represented an extension of Liberal ideas of equality and progress, as Metcalf states, but it represented, as well, the *Masonic* principles of universal brotherhood, equality, and progress that the leadership of the Grand Lodge of England (which included Ripon and Zetland) insisted upon when confronted with the racist views of Bengal's Freemasons. Ripon's fight with the Anglo-Indian community when he was Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master in the 1860s and 70s could not have been forgotten when, as viceroy, he was faced with the similar racism on the question of whether or not to allow Indians to serve as judges in cases involving Europeans in the *mofussil*. Indeed, this would not have been the first time that Ripon saw his political activities in a Masonic light.[163] The Ilbert Bill offers a good example of Freemasonry's influence on imperial policy-makers, for Ripon attempted to do as viceroy what he had done for Indians (especially Hindus) as Grand Master: to raise them to a level of rough parity with the British, in keeping with the principle of brotherhood. The arguments

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162 *Indian Journal of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July 1865): 51-52.

163 See minutes of Quarterly Communication of the United Grand Lodge of England, June 7, 1871; in *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 5 (August, 1871): 187. After returning to England from a trip to America in 1871 to adjudicate the *Alabama* incident, Ripon presided over a meeting of the Grand Lodge in June in which he declared: "I cannot doubt that one who was engaged in a mission of peace—(hear, hear)—in a mission the great object of which was to cement a friendship between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race—(hear, hear)—was engaged in a truly and most purely Masonic work...." For Ripon's Masonic activities in America, see "Grand Master of England in America," from *Masonic Jewel* (America?); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 5 (August, 1871): 191-92.

made by most Europeans in India against the Bill—arguments based on the notion of an essential difference between Indians and Britons—could not have failed to strike Ripon as identical to those objections voiced eighteen years earlier by the District Grand Lodge of Bengal, for they were. The big difference—something Ripon's Masonic experience could not have prepared him for—was that whereas the Grand Master was the ultimate interpreter of the laws and by-laws for all Masons in the English Constitution, Europeans in India could circumvent the Viceroy and appeal directly to their friends in Parliament and to English public opinion. Such political agitation would have been unheard of within Masonic government.

Interestingly, in *mofussil* "mixed" lodges in the Bombay Presidency, Indians and Britons seemed to achieved a relationship of parity, which means that most British Masons *were* willing to have their conduct towards their Indian brothers conform to the principle of fraternity. For example, Lodge *Barton*, No. 475 (S.C.), in Lonavla, halfway up the Ghats from Bombay to Poona, was a lodge made up mostly of railwaymen, both British and Indian. The Indians also included professionals or merchants who traveled between Bombay and Poona on a regular basis. In 1889, the previous lodge secretary, C. Hill, had apparently mishandled lodge monies. When he was to be tried in the lodge for his "unworthy" behavior, Hill wrote to the Grand Lodge of All-Scottish Freemasonry in India (in Bombay) objecting to having the Master, a Briton (W. Allen) and the Past Master, a Parsi (Pestonjee Dorabjee), taking charge in the conduct of the trial, not only "on the grounds that they were his principal accusers[,]" but also because he "objected to younger members trying him and stated that he wished to be judged by an experienced Past Master."[164] Here, "experienced" appears to have been a code word for "white." If

[164] See minutes for September 21, 1889, in Lodge *Barton, No. 475, S.C., Lonavla*, Minute Book for June 28, 1886 to December 12, 1903. Authored by various lodge secretaries. MSS. Courtesy of Mr. Phiroze M. Katrak, Secretary of Lodge *Barton*. In 1886, the lodge numbered 14, with 5—or thirty-six percent—being Indian. The Indians were all Parsis, although there would soon by Hindu members, too. See also minutes of Lodge *Barton* for March 22, 1873, in *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 1 (April 1873): 30—where we see present 10 Europeans, 6 Parsis, with another Parsi initiated that night. The Master and Deputy Master were Europeans, but the Substitute Master was a Parsi. According to my analysis of the lodge's membership

so, the Anglo-Indian objection to being tried by Indians in the *mofussil* was still strong six years after the Ilbert Bill controversy; however, the Masonic community handled the matter quite differently than did the Government of India, which caved in to European sentiment, for the G.L.A.S.F.I.'s Grand Secretary, J. Young, wrote back that Hill "would have to submit to the dicision [*sic*] of the Lodge...,"[165] and in March 1890 the members "expelled" Hill from the lodge.

Besides the Ilbert Bill, Ripon took other steps to make the position of western-educated Indians more equitable. In another way, too, Ripon contributed his Masonic experience to the governing of India: the evolution of local self-government. In 1882, Ripon decided to promote local government in rural areas, as well as municipalities. The official declaration announcing this move was clear as to what the intent of the viceroy was: "'It is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this imeasure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly designed as *an instrument of political and popular education*.'"[166] These schemes, too—with their emphasis on de-centralization—

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registry, by around 1890/91, there was an upsurge of Indian membership, mostly Parsi, but with Hindus and Muslims, too. In 1915 there were 45 members, with about 9 being Britons and 10 or 11 being Hindus, and the rest Parsis (there were no Muslim members that year). Around the same time in Poona, in the "mixed" lodge of *St. Andrew's in the East* (another S.C. lodge), the Master in 1871 was a Parsi, D.H. Chenoy—see *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 11 (February, 1871): 436.

[165] See See minutes for September 21, 1889, in Lodge *Barton, No. 475, S.C., Lonavla*, Minute Book for June 28, 1886 to December 12, 1903.

[166] Quoted in Donald B. Rosenthal, *The Limited Elite: Politics and Government in Two Indian Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 16-17 (my italics). See also R.P. Masani, *Evolution of Local Self-Government in Bombay* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 1, 24, 265, 268, and Ripon's despatch concerning readjustment of the functions of local bodies and the Government on pg. 330. Masani mentions another Mason, Lord Mayo, among those Viceroys who pushed for more power to local government: "From the days of Lord Mayo and Lord Ripon to this day the resolutions of the Government of India on local government have breathed the same spirit of freedom and enlightenment" (24).

Ripon also championed an early form of *swadeshi* in government purchasing—see Lord Ripon, speech at the Calcutta Trades Association dinner, February 6, 1883, in *Speeches of the Marquis of Ripon, 1883-84* (Calcutta: Office of Superintendent of Govt. Printing, India, 1884), 16—"...if ever there was a country in which it was of the highest importance that trade should flourish and spread, that manufactories should be established, and that new industries should be introduced, that country is India (*applause*); for I believe there are very few things which would do more to benefit the great mass of the population of this vast peninsula—which is now mainly (I may almost say exclusively) dependent on the land for its sustenance and support—than that there should be introduced in every part of India, other industries and other means of employment.... This great Government is... a very large consumer of goods, of many and varied descriptions. It makes vast purchases every year. Can those purchases be conducted in a manner more calculated in the future than they have been in the past to give legitimate encouragement to Indian industry?.... [W]e have for the last two years steadily devoted our attention to that subject."

resemble the Masonic structure of government, which permits much much autonomy to local lodges (so long as they conform to the principles and ritual forms of the Order). Indeed, Ripon had had experience with Masonic decentralization and governmental devolution in 1865 when, as Deputy Grand Master, he witnessed (perhaps even had a hand in) the granting of more authority to overseas District Grand Lodges.[167] This exemplifies Ripon's attitudes not only towards western-educated Indians, but all Indians, and suggests a more bottom-up vision of empire—one which more closely resembled that of the "empire" of the Grand Lodge of England.[168] Ripon envisioned training up Indians to be politically educated and mature, even if administrative efficiency had to suffer initially.[169] Where was all this education and political maturity to lead, if not to parity with the British, and what inspired it, if not the principle of Masonic brotherhood? Ripon strove to do in the Raj what he had achieved in the lodge. Regardless of his conversion to Catholicism, which came late in life, Ripon was, it seems, still a Mason at heart. The Ilbert Bill and the Local Self-Government Bill have never before been examined from a Masonic angle or from the perspective of Lord Ripon's career as Grand Master of England.[170]

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[167] See K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 19: "In this year the Grand Lodge of England changed the status of the Provincial Grand Masters in the Colonies and designated them District Grand Masters. The G.L. of England thought it desirable to increase the powers of the Provincial Grand Lodges in the Colonies and foreign countries...."

[168] In 1875, the Grand Lodge of Scotland, went so far as to grant authority to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India to reconstitute itself as the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, which, while this greatly expanded the jurisdiction of that P.G.L. (to cover all of India), also represented a devolution of power away from the G.L. of Scotland to India. The main reason was efficiency.

[169] After initial inefficiency, the Government of India (that is, Ripon) believed that "'improved efficiency will in fact follow'"—quoted in Donald B. Rosenthal, *The Limited Elite*, 17.

[170] Masonic influence on imperial policy was not restricted to India. In the last quarter of the century, for example, Lord Carnarvon, Disraeli's Colonial Secretary during the 1870s (after a stint as Prime Minister for ten months in 1868, Disraeli occupied that office again from 1874 to 1880), believed that Britain had a worldwide imperial trust which involved "keeping the peace, elevating the savage, relieving the hungry and uniting in loyalty all the British people overseas"—Rex Baker, "Empire: A Loss of Libido," in Vrinda Nabar and Nilufer E. Bharucha, eds., *Postcolonial Perspectives on the Raj and Its Literature* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1994), 23. Such a creed clearly reflects the Masonic principles of brotherhood, enlightenment, and relief. A champion of imperial federation, Carnarvon "interpreted moves towards Masonic unity and independence in Southern Africa in the 1870s as political signals for federation and 'responsible government'" among the South African states—Peter Merrinton, "Masques, Monuments, and Masons: the 1910 Pageant of the Union of South Africa," in *Theatre Journal*, vol. 49, no. 1 (1997): 14n.

B. Rudyard Kipling:

One Briton who set himself squarely against Ripon's proposal to introduce a greater degree of self-government among Indians, and to treat the western-educated Indians more equally in the quest for higher government positions was the young journalist—and ardent Freemason—Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). Kipling has often been described as a jingoistic racist in the last half of the 20th century, and even his autobiography indicts him on this score:

> In 1885 a Liberal Government had come into power at Home and was acting on liberal 'principle,'[171] which so far as I have observed ends not seldom in bloodshed. Just then, it was a matter of principle that Native Judges should try white women. Native in this case meant overwhelmingly Hindu; and the Hindu's idea of women is not lofty. No one had asked for any such measure—least of all the Judiciary concerned. But principle is principle, though the streets swim. The European community were much annoyed. They went to the extremity of revolt—that is to say even the officials of the Service and their wives very often would not attend the functions and levées of the then Viceroy, *a circular and bewildered recluse of religious tendencies.* Our paper... began with stern disapproval of the measure, and, I fancy, published much comment and correspondence which would now be called "disloyal."[172]

Not only did Kipling come down squarely on the side of the Anglo-Indians who opposed the bill, he distorted the issue in his autobiography, appealing to visceral European fears regarding white women and Indian males.

Despite this Masonically-inspired federalist vision, Carnarvon's scheme would have to wait thirty-five years to be realized: "Advices from Cape Colony state that the Cabinet there objects to take into consideration the scheme proposed by Lord Carnarnon [*sic*] for the confederation of the South African States, on the ground of its being premature"—"General Intelligence" for July 1875, in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 5 (August 1875): 183. The idea of imperial federation was an attempt to consolidate the empire on the basis of sentiment, rather than on a commitment of overwhelming British force (which was expensive). Masonic brotherhood must surely have suggested itself to Carnarvon as a means to foster such sentiment. Also, the federal structure of Masonic Grand Lodge government would have provided Carnarvon, as well as other imperial policy-makers who were Masons, with a model for the union of the constituent parts of the empire. (To be sure, in imperial politics the federal principle was put forward only for the "White" Empire, although the model would be taken up by Indian nationalists in a few decades in their demand for Dominion Status.)

171 Kipling is mistaken in his dates. Ripon was appointed in 1880, and served until 1884, and the Ilbert Bill controversy occurred in 1883-84. The viceroy who succeeded Ripon, Lord Dufferin, was no great friend to the western-educated Indians.

172 Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself For My Friends Known and Unknown* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1937), 56 (my italics). Kipling may have despised Ripon for abandoning Freemasonry for Catholicism, hence, the description of his "religious tendencies."

Yet, in 1885, Kipling was initiated in Lodge *Hope and Perseverance*, No. 782 (E.C.), in Lahore, at the age of twenty. In a letter to the London *Times* on January 16, 1925—which Kipling includes in his autobiography only *two* pages after discussing the specter of white women being tried by Indian men—Kipling describes his initiation and the utopian brotherhood of his "mother lodge":

> In '85 I was made Freemason by dispensation (Lodge Hope and Perseverance 782 E.C.) being under age,[173] because the lodge hoped for a good Secretary. They did not get him, but I helped, and got the Father to advise, in decorating the bare walls of the Masonic Hall with hangings after the prescription of Solomon's Temple. Here I met Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, members of the Araya and Brahmo Samaj, and a Jew tyler, who was priest and butcher to his little community in the city. So yet another world opened to me *which I needed.*[174]

This diversity brings to mind Kipling's poem, "The Mother Lodge" (see Chapter 6), and the passage offers an insight into the psychology of the quintessential child of empire. Kipling, like his character Kim, who was nicknamed "Friend to all the World," "needed" to escape the limitations and parochialism imposed on him by virtue of his skin color, and to unite as a brother with the diverse peoples of India.[175]

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[173] 21 years is the normal minimum age for initiation. See Raymond Karter, "Rudyard Kipling—Freemason: Master of His Craft," in *Year Book of the Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland*, 1961 (Edinburgh: 1961), 78: "He showed an unusual grasp of the tenets of Freemasonry from his earliest days and brought this intellect and intelligence into play so ably that only four months after his raising he read a paper on the 'Origins of the Craft in general and of the First Degree in particular'. Three months later he gave an address on 'Popular Views on Freemasonry.'" Although Kipling became a member of a number of lodges in England and India, he never held the office of Master, a fact which he regretted (see ibid., 78-82). This does not mean that he did not attain the third, or Master's degree, only that he was never elected to serve as a Master of a lodge.

[174] Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 58 (my italics). The Arya Samaj was especially active in the Punjab area, especially Lahore, in the late 1880s. If there were Freemasons among them, as Kipling states, this would demonstrate that Arya Samajis outside of Bombay were joining Freemasonry, as well, and prove that there were links between Freemasonry and Hindu socio-religious reformism generally in the Panjab in this period—especially where the Arya and Brahmo Samajas were concerned (see Chapter 5).

[175] See Paul Rich, "Kim and the Magic House," 330: "Kipling showed a preference early on for a racially-integrated version of Freemasonry. When he went to Allahabad to work as a reporter and joined Lodge Independence [with Philanthropy, No. 391], he was deliberately affiliating with what was considered a 'mixed' lodge with non-European members. This was in contrast with another Allahabad lodge, 'Amity and Independence', which was more British in composition."

In the "good," Masonic Kipling[176] and the "bad," racist Kipling we behold in microcosm the schizophrenic tension between Anglo-India's racist fears (which probably afflicted many British Masons in India)—often pivoting on sexuality, and lurking in the dark recesses of psyche—and the noble, unific sentiments which Masonry strove to inspire in its members, that they might advance the cause of the brotherhood of man. This was what Kipling—himself a product of "hybridity"—says that he "needed."[177]

The tension produced by such schizophrenia must have been difficult to bear for Kipling and for many British Masons, for how was one to reconcile white racism with the Masonic principle of brotherhood? "The Mother Lodge" suggests that such Britons found a casuistic solution to their dilemma by confining Masonic brotherhood to the lodge: "Outside—'Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!' / Inside—'Brother', and it doesn't do no 'arm." This tension was also present outside the lodge, for the British Empire was ultimately unwilling to treat India as it did its "White Empire," despite the liberal principles it espoused. In the end, Britain did not grant full citizenship to all its subjects, as had Rome.[178] The British—latter-day imitators of the Romans that they were[179]—

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[176] See Elliot L. Gilbert, *The Good Kipling: Studies in the Short Story* (Oberlin, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1970).

[177] This almost millenarian sentiment was eloquently expressed in the 18th century by Scotland's most beloved poet, Robert Burns (1759-96), a Mason and James and Alexander Burnes' relative:

> For a' that, and a' that,
> It's coming yet, for a' that,
> That man to man the world oer
> Shall brithers be for a' that.

In M.E. Speare, ed., *The Pocket Book of Verse, Great English and American Poems* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1945), 86. Robert Burns was the son of William Burns, the brother of James and Alexander's great-grandfather—see James Burnes, *Notes on the Name and Family of Burnes*, 18. Robert Burns was also "inaugurated" as the Poet Laureate of Lodge *Canongate Kilwinning* in Edinburgh in 1787—see James Stevens Curl, *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry, An Introductory Study* (Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 1991), 138, and color plate V for Stewart Watson's painting of the event. Kipling was also made Poet Laureate of the same lodge!

[178] In 212/13, the Roman emperor, Caracalla, formalized in law the notion of a united and egalitarian empire with a firmly Roman identity by extending Roman citizenship to most of his subjects. See Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 58. Nevertheless, how Britons would have interpreted this move is unclear, since the well-respected historian, Gibbon, had deemed Caracalla to be cruel and cowardly.

[179] See Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 143-44: "One can trace England's developing sense of her imperial destiny in the changing treatment by English writers of the imperialism of ancient Rome. The study of

knew about this, but could not bring themselves to go so far in their concessions to non-white subjects. The result was that the British Empire did not last as long as the Roman.[180]

In anticipation of the Prince of Wale's visit to India, the London-based *Freemasons' Magazine* said that he would serve to bind the Queen's subjects closer to the Crown, and it envisioned a paternalistic empire grounded in loyalty to the monarch and progressing in enlightenment.

> When the Prince of Wales lands in India he will see a mighty Empire, won by the stalwart prowess of his race, and he will meet with countless millions speaking a strange language, worshipping other gods, yet bowing down before the peaceful sovereignty of Victoria. The meeting of the Indian Princes with the Heir Apparent to the English throne will be a great, important, and an affecting one. He may be said to go in the name of the Sovereign, to confirm to those masses of people, all the very sincere declarations of the English Government of wise laws, civilizing arrangements, and equal rights, and just rule. In that strange and still mysterious land he will be able to point to a wise administration, and a contented people, and in the assurance of his sympathy with the princes and the people of Hindustan, he will no doubt greatly advance, there, by his royal presence, the *progress of improvement* and the prospects of peace. India has a great future before it....[181]

These sentiments reflect a convenient self-delusion, for Indians obviously did not have equal rights with Britons in India, especially in the administration of the country—something Indian Masons such as Dadabhai Naoroji were in England struggling to correct at the very time that this piece was written (see Chapter 9). Here, an attempt is made to

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Comparative Empire had always been a favorite of the classically educated servants of British India. For centuries classical analogies had come naturally to the lips of Englishmen discussing any subject; the subject of empire was no different and in fact lent itself more easily to classical analogy than did many other things." My thanks to Sudipta Sen for referring me to this work.

180 See ibid., 149-50: "British imperialism, precisely because it was national, was inescapably discriminatory in nature. The Roman empire had not been characterized by rigorous social exclusiveness.... Roman citizenship was not defined in racial terms, and because of this, Rome was able to enlist the genuine allegiance of peoples of varying origins.... England's empire was never one in which the provincials could feel they had an important stake. Citizenship in the British empire, regardless of promises contained in proclamations by the Queen, was firmly based on national exclusiveness, on 'the straightforward assertion of... the superiority of the conquering race.'" Hutchins is clearly unaware of the part Freemasonry played in the British empire, and the attempt by many British Masons to create a more inclusive, "Roman" type of empire by using the Craft.

181 "Our Royal Grand Master," in *Freemasons' Magazine* (London); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 2 (May 1875): 44 (my italics).

make fraternalism and paternalism compatible: Indians are presented as having equal rights, yet they also submit to the "stalwart prowess" of the English race. This reflects the notion of *imperium et libertas*, enunciated by "Liberal Imperialists," like Sir Charles Dilke, who in 1869 wrote *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867*, which sought to reconcile (or rather, saw no contradiction between) liberty and imperialism.[182] This certainly could be made to fit in with Masonic tenets of brotherhood and unity, but where India was concerned, the contradictory nature of romantic imperialism is all the more striking, for there, *libertas* and *imperium* were not easily reconcilable with *fraternitas* and *caritas*. No wonder the *Freemasons' Magazine* felt compelled to paint a brighter picture of India than what actually obtained. India, then, was the real test case for British Masonic brotherhood. Either they had to deceive themselves about the extent of liberty and equality in India, or they would have to throw out the theory of fraternity. The latter they could not do and still remain Masons, so they had to deceive themselves and also try to limit fraternity to the confines of the lodge, as Kipling's "Mother Lodge" suggests: "Inside—'Brother,' and it doesn't do no 'arm," but once outside the lodge, "Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!" was to apply. Yet, it must be conceded that within the lodge, the British were largely true to their egalitarian Masonic principles, and this was a big step for the British, given the racist feelings of so many of them. They could have gone the way of most German lodges in the late 19th century, which expelled the Jews, but they did not, and would not.

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[182] "Dilke's conception of a world community and—to all intents and purposes—a world dominated by the English-speaking peoples was based on the conviction of the inherent qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race, among which, of course, he counted of highest importance love of liberty and the faculty for democratic order in state and society.... As a parliamentarian, he enjoyed the confidence of the young Labor Party. Yet this same man gave romantic reasons for holding on to the Indian possessions.... It would be wrong to interpret Dilke's attitudes and actions in domestic and foreign policy as contradictions, from which an outsider tried adventurously to create a synthesis. To many, indeed most, of Dilke's contemporaries, the simultaneous practice of imperialist world policies and democratic domestic policy (including the white settlers' colonies) implied no contradiction. On the contrary, they were firmly convinced that one involved the other. The only question was the extent to which the non-white populations should be granted self-administration"—Heinz Gollwitzer, *Europe in the Age of Imperialism, 1880-1914* (London: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969), 129-30.

C. Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Bombay:

Moreover, there were British Masons who were inspired by the principle of brotherhood to the point of attempting to reformulate the Indian Empire along Masonic lines—to really institute equal rights and make imperialism a true fraternity of whites and non-whites. On February 14, 1908, Puisne Judge of the Bombay High Court, Frank C.O. Beaman, I.C.S. (later, Sir Frank Beaman), consecrated Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* under a charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland. The lodge, declared Beaman, "aims at vivifying the Imperial idea, by giving it practical application *under Masonic guidance*. We want Imperialism in India to be something more than a name; and we think that important results may, as we are sure they ought to, follow upon reinforcing Imperialism through India, by the Catholic virtue and humanizing influence of Freemasonry."[183] Beaman cited a lack of real interracial membership in any lodge in Bombay in this period, and stated that the new lodge desired to attract as members leading and "representative" men from the different communites, not just men who represented the "sects and communities" of India, but men who were "really entitled to represent them, as being those whose abilities and industry, or virtue have already made them eminent and respected."[184]

A year later, at a lodge banquet to which the Governor and other prominent citizens who were not Masons had been invited, Beaman restated imperial Freemasonry's claim "to be not only in name, but in truth and sincerity imperial, a brotherhood of Empire." He called on the Governor and the other guests to look about the room, stating:

> We have among our brethren, chiefs, representative men of many creeds, of many nationalities. Already a Madras Maharaja has enrolled under our banner and in no long time, I do not doubt, we shall have the flower of the old Rajput chivalry, Sikh

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[183] Justice F.C.O. Beaman (Lodge Master), inaugural speech at Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, February 14, 1908, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Appendix A (pp. 30-35), 31 (my italics). Courtesy of Dr. Viraf Dhalla.

[184] Ibid.

> aristocracy, brethren from the Himalayas to Comorin, as already we have among us men of light... distinguished, and rightly distinguished, as representing the best thought, and the highest character of the principal communities of Western India. Was there ever a lodge like this before? I doubt it. Was there ever a lodge thus striving to give practical shape and effects to the Imperial idea, thus trying to build a becomingly noble edifice for the indwelling and first habitation of the Imperial spirit[?][185]

The transformation of imperialism into a discrete and pervasive spirit which can dwell in the lodge, as the spirit of Christ dwells in the Church, according to Pauline theology, shows the degree to which the imperial idea could and did acquire religious and romantic dimensions, not least in Masonic circles.[186]

Announcing to his distinguished audience that Freemasonry could be made a "powerful and effective factor in Imperial integration,"[187] Beaman details the methods to achieve this, and in so doing elucidates a new vision of an egalitarian and fraternal empire:

> We bring together chosen brothers, men of whom those who know them speak well; men animated by a generous purpose, high ideals, ready to work whole-heartedly for their fellow creatures. Such we bring together on the common ground of Masonry, where all common and conventional distinctions, are brushed aside, where rank and wealth and office, race, colour and creed, are levelled, and a true equality established, to be the basis of a new aristocracy, the aristocracy of virtue and moral worth; and the sceptre of sovereignty goes to the best.... We know nothing of racial animosities, class hatreds; these in our assemblies are words without meaning. And when we understand each other, as in all Masonic co-operative activity we soon must, it is but a little step, from comprehension, to mutual esteem, sympathy and affection.[188]

This was a bold call for a new type of empire, based on the fraternal love of the Lodge, and reflects a willingness to accord parity within the empire to Indians at a time when

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[185] Justice F.C.O. Beaman, speech at Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, March 10, 1909, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Appendix B (pp. 36-40), 38.

[186] See J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 57: "'Préromantisme' is already identifiable in the background even of early masonry," especially in its appeal to the "mysterious and the ancient," and Masonry "may well have been in some measure a substitute for a traditional religious practice which had come to appear empty and meaningless."

[187] Justice F.C.O. Beaman, speech at Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, March 10, 1909, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Appendix B (pp. 36-40), 38.

[188] Ibid., 39.

agitation against British rule was taking a violent turn. Freemasonry alone, Beaman believed, had the power to quench the fires of animosity and reconstitute the empire into something altogether new and spiritual. But, perhaps by way of reassuring the imperial authorities and simultaneously counseling Indians to be moderate and patient in their demands, Beaman states:

> Our discipline is the best: for we learn to rule by learning to obey.... Brethren of the highest rank do not hesitate to accept the lowliest offices in our lodges;.... We do not clamor each one for his rights, but rather each one bows down before the ideal of Masonic duty.... With duty thus ever before their eyes[,] trained in unselfishness and loyalty, each of our brethren is always ready and alway well equipped to take upon himself offices of trust and power. For he who has shown that he can best serve, may be trusted to command.[189]

Here, Beaman is forcefully asserting to the Governor, a non-Mason, that Freemasons—including Indian Freemasons—have the "character" (so important to the British in their assessment of Indians) needed to trust with important imperial positions: "We make no higher claim than this, that we will send out to work where their duty calls them in other fields, good men, serviceable men, valuable men in whom no confidence that is reposed is ever likely to be misplaced, and surely will never be abused."[190] Paul Rich argues that *both* character and ritualism were what counted most in redeeming "natives" in the eyes of the British.[191] Freemasonry clearly stressed both.

Arriving at the logical conclusion of his argument, Beaman, states that when he lays down the reins of office in the lodge, his position will be taken by "some Indian Brother, I hope, to whom it will be my pleasure and pride to render the same loyal and faithful service he has rendered me."[192] The message to the Governor is clear:

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[189] Ibid., 40.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 104: "In fact, the British overseas did not judge native education by scholastic success, because they did not judge themselves by that criterion. It was sometimes the academic success that was trivial to them, not the ritualism. When their colonial subjects won academic laurels, they suspected that the accomplishment was superficial, achieved without absorbing the real lessons that the schools taught."

[192] Justice F.C.O. Beaman, speech at Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, March 10, 1909, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Appendix B (pp. 36-40), 40.

Freemasons constitute the best pool of candidates for appointment to high government office; Indian Freemasons can be trusted implicitly both for their probity and their loyalty to British imperialism, so long as that imperialism grants them equal access to the highest offices; and Britons could get used to serving Indians of integrity in imperial government, just as Britons in the lodge were willing to serve an Indian Master. This may explain the disproportionate number of Indian Masons who were appointed to Provincial Legislative Councils and who received titles and honors in the Bombay Presidency (see below). As it turned out, Beaman was Master from 1908 to January 1912, and was succeeded by the well-known Parsi doctor, Temulji B. Nariman. He, in turn, was succeeded a year later by the then Governor, Lord Willingdon, which firmly united imperial government and Masonic imperial brotherhood in Bombay under the same head.

D. The *Research* Lodge, No. 3184, E.C., Bombay:

Another, though less ambitious, attempt to found a lodge dedicated to bringing Indians and Britons together was the *Research* Lodge, founded in 1906. The lodge was to be a non-alcoholic lodge, and one of the reasons for this was given by Rev. Dr. J.G. Gibson (Past Prov. Grand Chaplain, Northumberland) in a speech at the lodge's consecration on October 31, 1906:

> Then there is the question of the Masonic Brotherhood and charity involved in this greater religious question. Large numbers of His Majesty's subjects in this mighty Empire are taught that the use of alcoholic liquors is forbidden to them. The sight of the liquors upon the table, the object lesson of men sitting near them, toasting each other in what they regard as forbidden beverages and the inevitable laudation of these generous drinks create an impression of soreness, of chaotic dislike, of distrust. Many Easterns will not attend the banquet and the function loses by their absence. The banquet is not a relaxation after labour; it is a refreshment for labour.... Moslem, and Jew, Parsee and Christian, Arab and Red Indian are at one regarding the value of a clear head and a steady hand: and also in regard to the evils which follow indulgence in any man's "favourite poison".... The Total Abstinence Lodge simply insists upon every Mason being made at home in the kindly consideration of his brethren. This is a policy and a spirit which more than anything else robs national suspicion of its pretext, racial jealousy of its warrant and denominational differences of their asperities.... As Freemasonry has in older nations tamed war lions and softened the sharp

> bitterness of struggles that were inevitable, so in the East she may base an inter-tribal, and an inter-racial understanding upon the tolerant spirit of an active temperance Lodge. Through such a window she may look in upon the mysteries of peoples only parly understood, and by her gentle suasion and common ideal of humanity she may win the Star of Asia to the wisdom of the Creator.[193]

Gibson had firm faith that the lodge and what it represented would "grow and spread rapidly, especially upon the racial frontier lines affording as it does a common base, and method for Masonic activity."[194] The lodge, however, seems not to have gotten its first non-European member until 1909, when Ounik K. Shahbasian, presumably an Armenian, was initiated. In 1911, two Muslims were initiated, and in 1912, one Haran-ul-Haque, another Muslim, is listed as being the lodge's steward. In 1915, yet another Muslim was initiated, and in 1916, a Hindu and two Jews were admitted.[195] However, in 1915 "a proposal was considered to restrict admission to those who recognise the Holy Bible as the V.S.L...."[196] For a lodge dedicated to attracting Indians of different faiths through the principle of abstinence from alcohol, this was an ironic move, indeed! According to Slator, the proposal was put forward by one Bro. Down, "an old Cavalry man who was a well known Bombay Policemean, being Commandant of the Mounted Police of his day, a brilliant ritualist but who had a bee in his bonnet" concerning the issue of restricting membership to professing Christians.[197] Down once did manage to get a by-law changed to that effect, but it was turned down by the Grand Lodge, "who ruled that it infringed the Constitutions."[198] Clearly, this lodge, despite its *raison d'etre*, was not successful in bringing in large numbers of Indians compared with Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*. Partly, this may have been due to subtle racism and religious exclusivity, as exemplified by

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193 J.G. Gibson, in S.H. Slator, *The Research Lodge, No. 3184 E.C., Bombay: A History of the First Fifty-Two Years, 1906-1958* (Bombay: self publ. by S. H. Slator and printed by Pyarelal Sah at The Times of India Press, 1958), 5-6.
194 Ibid., 6.
195 One of these, Moise Ittah, joined from Lodge *Noour el Hakim*, No. 125, of the Grand Lodge of Cairo. See ibid., 35.
196 Ibid., 32.
197 Ibid., viii.
198 Ibid., ix. For a more in-depth discussion of Christian "unexceptionalism" in Freemasonry in India, see Chapter 4.

people like Bro. Down. Partly, it may have been due to the lack of alcohol in the lodge—most of the few Indian members appear to have been Muslims. Parsis and Hindus stayed away. In 1920, there was an unprecedented (for any lodge which I have studied) "exclusion" *en masse*, when seventeen members were kicked out of the lodge. Presumably, this was for drinking, or, if for non-payment of dues, I suspect that the total abstinence principle was wearing thin with a number of Masons (except perhaps for some Muslim ones). Total abstinence was an intriguing basis for interracial unity, but it proved abortive—most westernized Indians in Bombay seem to have liked consuming alcohol at lodge banquets. Plus, the important members of society who were Masons—whether British or Indian—were to be found in lodges where alcohol was served, so even if one did not drink, such lodges were the place to be if one wanted to rub elbows with V.I.P. Masons.

VIII. INDIAN MASONS, BRITISH OFFICIALS, AND ROYAL BROTHERS

For Paul Rich, the "inequity of the public school system was enormous. So was the inequity of the Empire...."[199] Yet, the Masonic lodge was clearly not an extension of this. In fact, its principles challenged inequality and urged parity between rulers and ruled. To be sure, the "schoolboys" often became Masons, yet while both institutions valued ritualism, the lodge was the antithesis of the public school in its worldview. Mutual respect and brotherhood, not hierarchy and cowing the younger boys; gentle suasion, not brutal methods, infused the atmosphere of the lodge. If the public school offered the ex-"schoolboys" one model for running the empire, as Rich suggests, then the lodge offered them quite another.

A. Official "Brothers":

The breaking down of racial barriers through Freemasonry extended to relations between Indian Masons and important "official" British Masons, as well. By the middle

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[199] Paul J. Rich, *Elixir of Empire*, 111.

of the 19th century and continuing at least into first quarter of the 20th century, many British administrators in Bombay were themselves Freemasons, and a number of them were honorary members of Lodge *Rising Star*, which had mostly Indian members.[200] For example, James Gibbs, C.S.I., who had strongly supported the cause of allowing Indians to become Freemasons in the 1840s, was the District Grand Master of Bombay for the English Constitution (1870-79), as well as an affiliated member of *Rising Star* since 1847 (and an honorary member after 1875).[201] In his civil capacity, Gibbs was a Judge of the Bombay High Court, a Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University, and also served on Sir Richard Temple's Governor's, or Provincial, Legislative Council in 1879 before going on to serve in the Government of India.[202] Just as Gibbs had championed the cause of admitting Indians as Masons in the 1840s and Hindus in 1872, so, in 1885, on the eve of his retirement from the Executive Council and his departure for England, Gibbs was one of the few councillors who advised Dufferin soon after his arrival in India "on the political aspirations of the educated Indian community and who, conscious that these aspirations would eventually collide with the prejudices of the Anglo-Indians, had recommended to the Viceroy a cautious policy of gradual change."[203] One subject which Gibbs urged on Dufferin was the formation of a Volunteer Corps for Indians—a major

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[200] This was not unique to the British empire: for example, Richard van Dulmen points out that in Germany "during the last third of the [18th] century, large numbers of the new administrative elite, that is, highly placed state officials, frequented masonic lodges," which attracted them, because it offered a forum for enlightened social intercourse—see Richard van Dulmen, *The Society of the Enlightenment: the Rise of the Middle Class and Enlightenment Culture in Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 57. See also, p. 58: "The lodges were frequently havens for officers and bucolic aristocratic and middle-class state officials seeking to alleviate their social and cultural isolation. It was often in Masonic lodges that they made eash other's acquaintance. Thus, many of the contacts between members of the new administrative elite were forged by Freemasonry." In British Raj, while the institution of the club evolved to foster similar socializing among administrative elites and non-official Britons, Masonic lodges in India seem to have performed this function before the clubs arose, and continued to do so even afterwards, especially in the *mofussil*. In addition, they provided an opportunity to socialize with Indians who were Masons (as Chapter 2 shows), which is something that would not have occurred in the clubs.

[201] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 5, 196, 410.

[202] See Sir Richard Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India* (London: John Murray, 1882), 481.

[203] Briton Martin, Jr., *New India, 1885: British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 115. Reference is to a letter of James Gibbs to Dufferin, April 26, 1885.

demand of the western-educated Indians—which would draw on candidates of "'respectability and education,'" from the "'Native Gentry'" or "'graduates of the university, Justices of the Peace, Municipal Commissioners, Members of Local Boards, and their relatives.'"[204] This candidate pool overlaps perfectly with the background of most Indian Masons, and Gibbs must surely have had the community of Indian Masons in mind, believing—as he would have—that they would make loyal Volunteers.

Another important British Mason who was an honorary member of Lodge *Rising Star* from 1885 on[205] was Capt. Henry Morland (1837-91), Provincial Grand Master of all Scottish Constitution lodges in western India from 1870 to 1879 and again from 1883 to 1891.[206] He was also President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation for two years in the 1880s.[207] By 1889 he had become the Port Officer of Bombay.[208]

In 1893, an I.C.S. officer—a member of the "steel frame" of India—W.L. Harvey, C.I.E., joined Lodge *Rising Star*,[209] and in 1899, the Chief Justice of Bombay, Lawrence Hugh Jenkins, became an honorary member.[210] These are merely a few examples of middle-level "official" Britons who were Freemasons and also members of mixed lodges, however, space does not permit further elucidation.

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[204] James Gibbs to Dufferin, February 4, 1885, in ibid.

[205] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 191, 236.

[206] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 246. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India under Scotland was re-constituted as the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India (G.L.A.S.F.I.) in January 1875, with a territorial jurisdiction over all of India, Ceylon, Burma, and Aden (see Finan, 102, 120). This Grand Lodge, however, was to work "under Scotland," and so was not independent and sovereign, as other Grand Lodges are. Thus, it was actually a very large Provincial Grand Lodge with some extraordinary powers not usually given to P.G.L.s. Morland was the first Grand Master (G.M.) of A.S.F.I.

[207] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 244.

[208] *The India List, Civil and Military*, vol. 1. Issued by permission of the Secretary of State for India in Council (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co, January 1889), 543g.

[209] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 269.

[210] Ibid., 295. In 1907, while Jenkins was Chief Justice and also District Grand Master (E.C.) of Bombay, a lodge of mainly Indians—mostly Parsi with some Hindus and Muslims—was founded in his honor in Bombay. See Dosabhai R.D. Setna, *History of Lodge Sir Lawrence Jenkins, No. 3275, E.C.* (Bombay: For Private Circulation by A.B. Dubash at the "Jam-e-Jamshed" Printing Works, 1934).

B. "Brother" Governors:

Although various Governors of Bombay in the 19th century were Freemasons, such as Seymour Fitzgerald (1867-72),[211] James Fergusson (1880-85)—along with many in the provincial civil service of Bombay—beginning in the last years of the 19th century we find Governors who were not only Freemasons, but who were appointed Grand, or District Grand Masters of both the English and Scottish Constitutions in the Bombay Presidency. The first of these was Lord Sandhurst, who in 1897 became the first Governor of the Bombay Presidency to visit Lodge *Rising Star*.[212] Later in the year, Sandhurst again visited the lodge with a guest and fellow Mason, E.F.G. Hatch, who was a Member of Parliament for the Eastern Division of Lancashire (the other major cotton-goods manufacturing center in the Empire). Hatch said that he had been looking forward "for some time" to visiting the lodge and expressed his pleasure "to observe that in the lodge Europeans, Hindus, Mussalmans, and Parsis all united together in one bond of friendship and that a better verification of the many advantages of Freemasonry could not be found."[213] That Sandhurst chose to bring Hatch to an Indian lodge demonstrates the former's belief that the spread of Freemasonry among Indians was important, both for Indians and for the Empire.

In 1898, on his third visit to the lodge, Sandhurst addressed the members at some length, congratulated the lodge "on the harmony and good-fellowship that prevailed therein and the large and representative gathering of Masons such as he had never witnessed, he said, in any other lodge, and the generous way...[the members]...had contributed to the new Masonic Temple."[214] Official and political Britons like Sandhurst

[211] See "Our Masonic Rulers," in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 12 (March 1870): 444—"On this side of India we are glad to find that our excellent Governor, Bro. Sir Seymour Fitz-Gerald, who, we understand, is a Mason of thirty-five years' standing, has joined Lodge *St. George*, and recently received the benefit of the Ineffable Degrees, in the Bombay Chapter of Sovereign Princes of Rose Croix of H? R? D? M? "

[212] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 284.

[213] Ibid., 288-89.

[214] Ibid., 293-94.

and Hatch were clearly impressed by the efficacy of Freemasonry in bringing so many and disparate peoples of the empire together in brotherhood.

Sandhurst was replaced as Governor in 1900 by another Mason and joint head for both the English and Scottish Masonic constitutions, Henry Stafford Baron Northcote. In 1904 he, in turn, was replaced by the Chief Justice of Bombay, Sir Lawrence Jenkins, as District Grand Master.[215] And in December 1904, the new Governor, Lord Lamington, was made Grand Master of G.L.A.S.F.I.[216] Lamington, along with Justice Lawrence Jenkins, visited Lodge *Rising Star* in 1906 at the installation of its new Master, D.F. Wadia and expressed

> his very great satisfaction at the prosperous condition of the finances and the harmony prevailing amongst the brethren, and... said he personally highly valued the privilege of being an honorary member of the lodge, which he said was the premier native lodge in India, and hoped he would be able to pay more visits to the lodge.[217]

Being a Freemason, then, allowed Indians who may not have had an aristocratic lineage or even great wealth to gain a special access to the highest levels of the political power structure in Western India. This must have been a thrilling experience and would have served to create a larger imperial patriotism while simultaneously fostering Indian nationalism because it allowed Indians to interact with British officialdom on an equal footing.

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[215] K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 38.

[216] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 318. Lamington cut short his term of Governor in 1908 to return to England because of his wife's health—see Wadia, 328.

[217] Ibid., 322. Lamington had already been made an honorary member of the lodge in 1905, and Jenkins was already one; see Wadia, 319. One of the duties of the Grand Master is to inspect, or depute others to inspect, the books of a subordinate lodge at the end of the year. Lamington attended the lodge again in March 1907 in order to present a book of Masonic essays, the *Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume*, to K.R. Cama on behalf of the lodge. The other lodge members were anxious to see Cama honored by "the highest masonic functionary in the land." See D.F. Wadia, 326.

C. Royal "Brothers":

Perhaps most fascinating, however, was how Freemasonry provided Indians with a peculiar access to the British royal family.[218] Metcalf points out that in the early 20th century the Government of India sought to foster in Indians a personal loyalty to the British sovereign rather than loyalty to an empire of which they were not equal members.[219] Already, since the time of Victoria's Declaration (1858) guaranteeing equal opportunity in the Raj, Indians had been asserting their loyalty to the British Crown to preface their demand for better positions within the Government of India and to allay suspicions that they sought to undo the empire by demanding such equality.

Freemasonry reinforced loyalty to the Crown on the part of Indians because the Crown was intimately connected with the Craft. Queen Victoria "was for more than half a century patron of the Craft," and when she died, "Masons deplored her loss equally with the rest of the world at large.... Brother K.R. Cama...pointed out the keen interest always displayed in matters masonic by several members of the royal family, including her beloved son King Edward VII (most justly styled Edward the Peace-maker) and his Brother, our Honorary Member, His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught."[220].

In the late 1880s, by far the most prestigious member of the Masonic brotherhood in India was the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in India (1887-1890)—Victoria's son, H.R.H. Duke of Connaught and Strathearn—who was well-liked by Indians for his "love of justice as between Europeans and Natives of all ranks."[221] In November 1887 the Duke was installed as District Grand Master of Western India at

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[218] This began back in England. Recall Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's Masonic garden party outside London, where non-elite Masons spoke of the Prince of Wales (who attended the party) as their "Brother George"—see Chapter 6, and Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb*, vol. 1, 193.

[219] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 221.

[220] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 303-04.

[221] *Indian Spectator*, February 9, 1890.

Bombay (E.C.).[222] Fakirji Dinshaw, a Parsi member of Lodge *Rising Star*, was director of ceremonies on behalf of the lodge in the ceremonial investiture of the prince.[223]

In 1888, the Duke, as District Grand Master of Bombay, paid a visit to Lodge *Rising Star*—his first to a native lodge—on the night that Muncherji M. Bhownagri, second Indian Member-to-be of Parliament (see Chapter 8), was installed as Master. The outgoing Master, N.R. Chichgur, "accorded His Royal Highness a fitting and cordial welcome...both as a *Brother Mason* occupying the most exalted Office in the sister Constitution and as a son of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, whose name was a household word throughout the British Empire."[224] At that meeting the duke was elected an honorary member, and the "august Duke was pleased to say a few words in praise of the excellent working of the lodge and to congratulate it on the prosperous condition of its Charity Funds."[225] The act by natives of India addressing a member of the British royal family as "brother" would have betokened great insubordination if not contextualized by the Masonic principles of universal brotherhood and equality, for in Freemasonry "a king is reminded, that though a crown may adorn his head and a sceptre his hand, the blood in his veins is derived from the common parent of mankind, and is no better than that of his meanest subjects...."[226]

Through Freemasonry, then, Indians could gain proximity to the Royal Family—not just ceremonial proximity, but something more intimate and cozy (as a lodge setting suggests)—which was unavailable to other Indians, even to members of the Indian nobility unless they were Masons, too (which a number were). Paramountcy, by

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[222] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 245. The Duke chose to retain this office even after he left India in 1890. From 1890-95, the District was ruled by a Deputy D.G.M. based in Bombay. From 1895 to 1900, Sandhurst ruled in the capacity of a "Pro-D.G.M.," which is a kind of acting D.G.M. In 1900, Northcote succeeded Sandhurst as Pro-D.G.M. until 1901, when the Duke of Connaught gave up the post to become Grand Master of England on the Prince of Wales ascending the throne of Britain, and Northcote became the official D.G.M.—see K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 30, 67.
[223] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 245.
[224] Ibid, 248 (my italics).
[225] Ibid., 249.
[226] George Oliver, *The Book of the Lodge*, 23.

definition, meant that Indian princes could not call the British monarch "brother" (or "sister" in Victoria's case)—it was not a relationship of parity. Freemasonry alone created that. In the Duke of Connaught's visit to *Rising Star* we get some sense of the power of Freemasonry to effect a Turnerian "liminal," meaning-creating experience through its ritual elimination of hierarchy, not just between king and commoner, but between colonizer and colonized. It is not difficult to imagine the thrilling psychological impact of such events upon Indian Masons, and on the power relations between Indians and their British "masters" in the outer world, where it could only have led to greater demands for parity and respect on the part of Indian Masons.

IX. CONCLUSION

In a wonderful visual statement on how Masonic brotherhood could operate between official Britons and western-educated Indians, we have a photograph taken in 1899 (see Illustration 1) showing the members of Lodge *Holmesdale-in-the-East*, which included in its ranks the Governor of Bombay, Lord Sandhurst. The picture was taken at Government House, near Malabar Hill, where Sandhurst had invited his "brothers" for a special meeting. Of the twenty-seven members in the picture, only five were Europeans, whereas seven were Hindus, three, Muslims, and twelve, Parsis.[227] The fact that the Governor of Bombay chose to be part of this lodge—to be a brother to its mostly Indian members (who were mostly professional men)—*and* to invite them to his home would have been a remarkable event at that time, and, in our own time, challenges our received assumptions concerning the nature of British colonialism in India at the turn of the century. It was during this "high Raj" period when British-Indian socializing was at a low point, and Britons were being influenced by scientific racism to see Indians as permanent "Others." If a picture paints a thousand words, this photo showing the

[227] See Nasarvanji Dinshaw Mistri, comp., *A Short Historical Sketch of Lodge "Holmesdale-in-the-East" of Mark Master Masons" (72 E.C.), From its Consecration in 1865 to its Jubilee in 1915* (Bombay: n.p., 1916), photo between pp. 48 and 49.

Governor surrounded by his Indian "brothers" is an essay which proves that Freemasonry offered a new vision of empire—an empire of brotherhood—which united the governed with the governors. Ostensibly a Christian, Sandhurst had a broader, more inclusive, religious practice—one which in turn served the needs of imperial unity much better than did Christianity. It is not that Freemasonry had the promotion of imperialism built into it as a fundamental aim (for Freemasonry long predated British imperialism); rather, the British found they had something in their midst—something which had helped in their own national unity—and which might also serve imperial ends. Was this a cynical use of Freemasonry? Yes, if the British did not believe in brotherhood; no, if they saw the empire as furthering universal unity on a basis of parity. The "humanistic ideals of brotherhood, love, goodwill and charity transcending man's racial and religious distinctions... were closely associated with Indian Freemasonry" of the late 19th century.[228]

However, British Masons differed in the degree to which they were willing to apply the principle of brotherhood. On the one hand, there was Beaman, of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood.* On the other, there was Kipling, who, in his poem "The Mother Lodge," believed that the principle of equality implicit in brotherhood could be safely confined to the lodge, where "it doesn't do no 'arm." This was not fool-proof, however, as even Kipling's fictional characters, Danny and Peachy, discovered. In real life, too, the Mason Dhalip Singh, for example, betrayed the British Crown and sought an alliance with the Russians. Nevertheless, like Kipling, many British in India either deluded themselves into thinking that by promoting Freemasonry as the *de facto* imperial cult they were only strengthening the empire; or they liked playing the odds; or they were too seduced by the phenomenon of mixing with Indians as equals in the lodge to give it up, despite its danger. In the end, Freemasonry was an unwieldy, because covertly

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[228] Enamul Karim, "The River of the Arrow," *The Kipling Journal*, vol. 48, no. 217 (March 1981): 13—Karim is referring to an assertion made in a Masonic work: W.K. Firminger, *Freemasonry in Bengal and the Punjab* (Calcutta, 1906), lxviii.

subversive, tool in the service of British imperialism, for it carried with it the ideals of the Enlightenment and the Glorious Revolution—constitutionalism, liberty, and, of course, fraternity and equality. In so many ways, then, Freemasonry accorded better with Indian nationalist aspirations than it did with the paternalistic attitude characteristic British officialdom in India, and this is the subject of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 8

"THE LODGE AND *SVARAJ*," PART 1: MASONIC BROTHERHOOD AND CONCEPTUALIZING THE NATION

> Hence, while every Mason retains his religious peculiarities, people of various castes and creeds may fraternise in the recognition of a common bond, and demand and receive mutual benefits.
> ... Next to allegiance to God, and springing from it, its controlling principle is Love for man as man.
> ... She has never sought to establish her sway over men, but within them. She exerts her power as a pervading influence, and never in the form of arbitrary control.
> ... Before her altars distinctions vanish, and all men meet on the level. The prince and the peasant stand alike in her presence.... She provides for the physical wants of the body and the yearning needs of the soul. She stands as man's instructor and guide, his protector and friend.... Her beneficial influence is not so conspicuous in the seats of wealth and power,... but with the masses of mankind, who need defence and sympathy, and whose wants demand relief.
> ... This tie of brotherly love, regarded not as a sentiment, but as an obligation, is the glory of Masonry, and clothes her with universal power....
>
> Jehangeer C. Mistree, Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, July 12, 1911[1]

I. IMAGINING THE MASONIC AND INDIAN "NATIONS"

Although it seems self-evident to some scholars that the western-educated Indians of whatever caste or community would naturally gravitate toward each other to form a new group consciousness based on their common education[2]—a consciousness which fed into Indian nationalism—what we see just as often is that members of this group involved themselves in promoting reforms in, and advancing the interests of, their own castes and

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1 Jehangeer C. Mistree (Lodge Secretary), "Teachings of Freemasonry," speech at Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, July 12, 1911, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Appendix H (pp. 83-87).

2 See, for example, Briton Martin Jr., *New India, 1885: British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 294-311, especially 295-97: "At least 80 per cent of the representatives [to the Indian National Congress] spoke English; forty-five delegates [out of eighty-odd participants] had attended colleges and twenty-five at least had taken higher degrees. Over half were lawyers, of whom most were Brahmins and Parsis.... journalists figured strongly.... The overwhelming majority of the Congress belonged to the middle- or lower-income groups.... With fewer social and economic distinctions, the Congress constituted a more cohesive body, the majority of whose members, because of their Western education, their training in law or in journalism, and their middling incomes, could cut across differences of religion, caste, title, and wealth to meet and act on common ground as a new class in the social and political spectrum of British India." I would argue that the fact that they *could* cut across such barriers does not mean that they *would* cut across them necessarily.

traditional communities. For example, while Bombay "teemed with societies, most of them... were concerned with improving social conditions and reforming religious practices. Rarely crossing religious, caste and linguistic barriers, each of these charities held that reform, too, should begin at home."[3] Yet, those who worked for reform in their own communities were often the same people who became involved in regional organizations and the Congress. What enabled them to transcend corporatist barriers and work together on larger issues? What, for example, gave W.C. Bonnerjee the idea that together they could work for the eradication "of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country" and strive to consolidate the "sentiments of national unity"?[4] Freemasonry seems to be the institution which provides the historical missing link for "New India."

At a Parsi Jamshedi Navroz new year's festival held at Freemason's Hall on March 21, 1877, K. R. Cama, Orientalist, Parsi reformer, and long-time Mason, gave a speech on "Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay," in which he claimed for Freemasonry a unique role among all the political and religious reformist movements in being able to establish deep ties of friendship and brotherhood among Indians of all communities. After speaking of the lodge as a place which had provided a meeting ground between Indians and Europeans, Cama declared:

> But the same happy result might be said to have been attained in Masonry, even between natives and natives. Where else, may I ask, do you find a Mahomedan dining with a Parsee, or a Parsee with a Hindoo, or a Hindoo with a Mahomedan? Where else out of a Masonic lodge? Nowhere. True, there are such institutions as Bombay Associations and East India Associations, and what not, where Hindoos, Mahomedans, and Parsees meet together, but, as you are aware, the business done there is more of a political character than social or moral. There are other Associations of various kinds and sorts, social or religious, *but the object of none*

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[3] Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 227.

[4] W.C. Bonnerjee at first Congress session, quoted in Annie Besant, *How India Wrought For Freedom: The Story of the National Congress Told From Official Records* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1915), 7. Bonnerjee, a Mason, says that the sentiments of national unity had their origin "in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign." Of course, Ripon had been the erstwhile Grand Master of England!

> *of them is to induce and promote social amalgamation between race and race, and hence nowhere are the bonds of caste prejudices so thoroughly struck down as in Freemasonry.* There are Rahanomay Mazdayacnas, or Prarthana or Arya Samajas, or Anjumani Islam, but all and each for sectarian, race, purposes alone, for Parsees, Hindus, and Mahomedans separately, exclusively, and distinctively.[5]

Cama goes on to explain why Freemasonry alone is capable of carrying out the task—although he does not say it in quite those words—of imagining and constructing the Indian "nation."

> Private friendships and sympathies between members of caste and caste, race and race, nation and nation, it is not the business of these institutions to create, cultivate, and foster. *This mission is particularly reserved for noble Freemasonry.* Freemasonry, then, in the past, has supplied... one great want, accomplished one great purpose, done one great service, *viz.*, it has brought race to race in the close bond of union, fraternal regard, and kind sympathies. *Well, that is a mighty result, so early achieved by Masonry, not to be lightly thought of, anywhere else, but particularly in a country, which is known to be ground down, for centuries past, by the rigid rules of castes and prejudices, based upon ignorance and bigotry, as our native country, India, is.*[6]

Remarkably, all the other organizations mentioned by Cama were themselves led by Masons or had some connection to Freemasonry (see Chapter 5)! Although these bodies carried out socio-religious reform within sectarian boundaries, this was not seen to be at odds with the concepts of civil society and the nation. It was necessary to change attitudes within Indian communities—Benedict Anderson's "sub-nations"—before their members would be willing and ready to participate in the larger life of an Indian *nation*. According to Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, caste (and most Indian communities were castes) has contributed to the realization of political democracy at an all-India level more than it has inhibited it.[7] Indeed, the relationship between corporatism and liberal politics is a complicated one.

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[5] Khurshedji Rustomji Cama, "A Discourse on Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay" (delivered at the Freemasons' Jamshedi Naoroz Festival on Wednesday, the 21st of March 1877) (Bombay: Printed at the Times of India Steam Press, 1877), 6 (my italics).

[6] Ibid., 6-7 (my italics).

[7] See Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 24.

A nation, to be a nation, has to be imagined as a fraternity where its members are roughly equal and are not divided into "sub-nations"—at least not in any way which detracts from loyalty to the larger nation. But smaller entities often do compete with the loyalty which is supposed to be directed to the fictive primordial nation. According to Cama, then, Freemasonry was sufficiently universal and sufficiently egalitarian to carry out the task of removing, or at least attenuating, the corporatist loyalties of caste and community:

> By means of these Lodges, we have now amongst us numbers of Parsees, Mahomedans, and Hindoos initiated into Freemasonry, all unitedly bent in pursuit of a common object. They are drawn closer to each other, their hearts beat in more unison, and their aim is more single here than it is possible to be elsewhere. An unanimity of feeling they are taught to hold, and it is expected to pervade through them all. *Where else, might I ask, would you find them so happily commingling together as within a tyled Lodge or on a Masonic banquet table?*[8]

The role of the lodge in unifying the "profane" world was stressed by George O.W. Dunn, the District Grand Master of Bombay (E.C.), who urged his fellow Masons in 1910 to "'feel your Lodge to be a unit working for the cause of brotherhood, for the removal of misunderstanding, for friendship without distinction of race, creed, or colour,...'"[9] It is to the Masonic lodge, then, that we must look in order to find the first institutional vision of a pluralistic Indian nation, where all members were brothers and committed to the reform, along Masonic lines, of Indian society. It began by bringing together Zoroastrians and Muslims (a remarkable achievement in itself) and went on to include Hindus. By its ability to transcend corporatist loyalties and break down parochial identities within the lodge, Freemasonry paves the way for people to construct larger, more inclusive, identities and loyalties—whether they be national, imperial, or global in scope. From a Masonic perspective, the nation is a step in the right direction, although the ultimate goal

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[8] Khurshedji Rustomji Cama, "A Discourse on Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay," 5 (my italics).

[9] George O.W. Dunn; quoted in K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* (Bombay: n.p., 1961?), 42.

is universal brotherhood. This allows Freemasons to endorse the idea of a pluralistic nation and contribute to its development.

With respect to religious differences and the problems these pose in imagining the nation, Freemasonry plays a curious role. As K.R. Cama stated in 1877:

> On former occasions, I have taken the subjects of my discourses from the Zoroastrian religion, illustrating them in connection with Freemasonry, and *vice versa*. Not to monopolize the discourses to myself, or to everlastingly select their subjects from the Zoroastrian religion alone, it was my great desire, on Lodge "Islam" having newly joined us, that this year some erudite Hindoo or Mahomedan brother should give us a discourse, showing some connection, if any, between the Hindoo or Mahomedan religion and Freemasonry. But, unfortunately, there was not sufficient time left to such a brother...; however... we shall have either a Hindoo or a Mahomedan brother to give you discourses on future occasions, comparing Hindooism with Freemasonry, *or rather Freemasonry traced out in the Hindoo religion.*[10]

Nationalism can be constructed out of a shared religious identity (as in the case of Greeks in their struggles with the Turks). This is difficult, though, where religious diversity prevails. Early on, Freemasonry provided a solution to this problem (see Chapter 4). By finding a primordial Freemasonry embedded in the various religions—as discovered by Masonic antiquarian and anthropological researches—Masons of different faiths could conclude that their religions were somehow linked through this *ur*-religion.[11] We have seen in previous chapters how this concept fostered tolerance among British Masons towards the religions of their Asiatic subjects, and how this idea was seen by some imperial rulers to serve political purposes, by creating an additional bond of loyalty between ruler and ruled. Here we see Indians attempting to use the same strategy to instill a sense of religious harmony in the forging of a pluralistic state. The implications of this for Indian nationalism of the type characterized by the slogan "Unity in Diversity"

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[10] Khurshedji Rustomji Cama, "A Discourse on Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay," 1-2 (my italics).

[11] Not all Masons saw things this way, but this theory—which came to be associated the "Anthropological School" of Masonic scholars—represented a major strand in Masonic thinking in the 19th century. In a way, it mimicked the Christian latitudinarianism of the 17th century which, it was hoped, would diminish sectarian conflicts through a return to a simple Christianity and an emphasis on moral behavior. Masonic lodges promoted this latitudinarian orientation.

are clear. This concept must have resonated with Hindu and Muslim Masons especially. For Hindus, Krishna speaks of being born from age to age for the promulgation of *dharma*; for Muslims, the *Qur'an* speaks of the "Mother Book" (*umm al-kitáb*) that is with God and declares that all the Prophets have preached Islam, each revealing a chapter of the "Mother Book." Similarly, Masonic antiquarianism seeks ultimately to link the followers of various faiths together, through a primordial, universal, and eternal Freemasonry. It is no coincidence that in 1886 K.R. Cama—along with the District Grand Master (E.C.) from 1879 to 1887, E. Tyrrel Leith—founded the "Anthropological Society of Bombay"[12] which was no doubt dedicated to such antiquarian efforts (recall the "Anthropological School" of Masonic research mentioned by J.S.M. Ward—see Chapter 5).

Such researches and theories could be used by Indians to adjust their cultural relationship with the British, too. At Lodge *Yarborough* in Brighton in 1868, Dadabhai Naoroji said:

> The young Parsees, yet mere striplings in Masonry, are already showing the arrogance of contesting that if Masonry was not their own, they were at least fellow Masons from the earliest period. Though I do not pretend to offer any opinion on the result I may say that I think the time is coming when the learned doctors of Masonry of the west and of the east will have a stand-up fight upon some of the now-received theories on the history of Masonry.[13]

One wonders why the origin of the common *ur*-religion would be contested if there weren't political ramifications to it.

No religion, however universal, was for Masons as inclusive as the Craft. This was a point of pride with them. Such a theory of religious history enabled Freemasonry to counter sub-nationalisms which were based on religious exclusiveness and which imagined polities that were more parochial than the imagined community of the larger

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[12] See Bahmanji Behramji Patel, "A Sketch of Important Events in the Life of Mr. Kharshedji Rustamji Cama," in Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K.R. Cama Memorial Volume: Essays on Iranian Subjects* (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1900), xxv. Cama was its vice-president in 1889 and for many years after.

[13] Dadabhai Naoroji, speech at Lodge *Yarborough*, September 19, 1868 in *Bristol Guardian* (date unknown); repr. in *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 5, no. 8 (November 1868): 317.

nation, for primitive Freemasonry, the oldest "religion," had been universal from the start. All this was indeed "not to be lightly thought of," as Cama put it. This theory provides the basis and justification for a kind of secularism. According to the Rudolphs,

> Secularism, the fourth process favoring homogenization of culture, creates conditions under which all Indians, "Sanskritized" and "Westernized," modern and traditional, low and high, can find or create common norms and structures. It downgrades, neutralizes, or eliminates the beliefs, symbols, and barriers embedded in the ritual and sacred dimensions of society, substituting in their stead profane and mundane standards of wealth, power, and education. Unlike Westernization, secularization does not carry alien cultural baggage, baggage that may or may not be secular or modern.... Like compartmentalization, it provides the possibility of Indianizing modernity.[14]

Yet, while Freemasonry promotes education and to some extent wealth, it also introduces new rituals, symbols, and sacred dimensions into the society of the lodge. However, these are seen to be less circumscribed in their applicability than the ritual world of any particular religion, enabling Freemasonry to promote a civil religion and a presumed universal morality. Thus, Freemasonry does not mesh well with the Rudolphs' view of secularism in India, although it establishes its own brand of secularism.

This mode of secularism involves not putting up a strong wall of separation between church and state, but instead giving equal play to all the churches with none being sponsored or favored by the state. Masonry in India did this symbolically by maintaining various of the "Volumes of the Sacred Law" in mixed lodges. Thus, we find that in a predominantly Parsi lodge, like *Rising Star*, a Hindu, Atmaram Pandurang (founder of the Prarthana Samaj), was made the *Bhagavad Gita* Bearer in 1880.[15] And, in 1902, in Lodge *Holmesdale-in-the-East*, "Bros. P.B. Jijibhoy, V.K. Vandekar and Mirza

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[14] Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, 123.

[15] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 213. Of course, there was a corresponding Zend Avesta Bearer in this lodge, and, presumably, a Qur'an Bearer.

Hussein Khan respectively presented the Lodge with the sacred volumes of *Zand-Avesta*, *Bhagwad-Gita* and *Al-Koran....*"[16]

Yet, modern nationalism also has to close the door on any loyalty which transcends the imagined borders and ethnicity of the nation, and this Freemasonry refuses to do, for it can never be dissociated from a belief in a universal brotherhood which ultimately encompasses the whole earth:

> The domain of Freemasonry is not circumscribed by political boundaries; her sympathies reach like the rays of heaven, every nation and clime. Does not the contemplation of this truth expand the mind, and fill it with enlarged views of the mission of humanity? Are not the ties which bind a Mason to his fellow, types of that ideal commonwealth where brotherhood and peace shall ever reign?[17]

Freemasonry in India, then, sought to break down barriers between the British colonizer and Indians, and also between the different Indian communities. India was a universe of diverse peoples. This made it a fitting object for Freemasonry, which sought to "harmonize its discordant elements" (a popular Masonic image used to describe Freemasonry's chief function). It helped make the shift from "Native" to "Indian" clearer, as Cama's talk shows (although he himself doesn't yet use the word).

Cama's talk also shows that fraternal feelings were based on face-to-face contacts, not the kind of anonymous fraternity of the modern nation which Benedict Anderson speaks of. Yet, ultimately, even that feeling of fraternity must be grounded on actual interactions between people in a "public space" like the Masonic lodge (as Margaret Jacob has attempted to show the lodges to have been in 18th-century Europe). More than newspapers are needed to see that others think like oneself. Taking a position which complicates Anderson's thesis, I would argue that Masons knew they would find a society of "brothers" the world over. Masons were fond of recounting such experiences in their

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[16] Nasarvanji Dinshaw Mistri, comp., *A Short Historical Sketch of Lodge "Holmesdale-in-the-East" of Mark Master Masons (72 E.C.), From its Consecration in 1865 to its Jubilee in 1915* (Bombay: n.p., 1916), 54.

[17] "The Earl of Dalhousie and the Scottish Craft," the *London Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 11 (February 1871), 407-08.

journals. Likewise, Indian nationalism in the 19th century was less concerned about stopping "leakage" of national sentiment at the top (where national sentiment met imperial sentiment and universalism) than it was with breaking up sub-national loyalties percolating up from below. Indeed, Indian nationalists in this period were anxious to come closer to the British. Hence, Freemasonry ideally served the peculiar needs of Indian nationalism in its early phase.

II. MASONIC FRATERNITY AND IMPERIAL CITIZENSHIP

The Indians who gave birth to the nationalist movement were motivated by one overarching principle—parity. They sought to be equal to the British in the running of the Indian empire, as was promised them in Victoria's Proclamation of 1858. Indians never achieved this fully, but there was an evolution in political gains over the century leading up to 1947. The next two this chapter explore how the fraternalism of the lodge created tensions for the paternalism of the Raj by opening up to Indians a new world where they could interact with British officials on a level of rough parity. The psychological effect of such fraternization, I have stated elsewhere, could not be contained within the lodge, and eventually Indian Masons would be found in the front ranks of those leading the demand for political equality in the Raj (the subject of the next chapter). More generally, Indian Masons sought to renegotiate their status in regard to the British both inside and outside the lodge.

A. "Brother" Governors and Legislative Appointments of Indian "Brothers":

Governors of Bombay who were Masons have been mentioned previously. Such Masonic governors and other members of the Bombay government seem to have looked first to the Indian Masonic community when making non-aristocratic appointments to the governmental bodies of Bombay. The first of the Governors to do so appears to have

been Sir James Fergusson (1880-85), who appointed Badruddin Tyabji to his Legislative Council.[18]

Although the Bombay government had tended initially to favor merchants princes and large landowners when nominating Indians to the Governor's Legislative Council, the western-educated Indians soon demanded a voice in political affairs and to be considered for nomination. In the late eighteen-sixties, V.N. Mandlik, a leader of the intelligentsia, "launched a campaign through his newspaper *Native Opinion* for a change in the government's policy regarding nomination to the Bombay [Legislative] Council."[19] *Native Opinion*, by disputing the wisdom of the government's seeing the *shetias* as the representatives of the people and appointing only them to the Council, called instead for selecting the "real" representatives of the Native community.

> From the eighteen-seventies onward intellectuals from Bombay and Poona began to be considered for nomination to the Bombay Council. V N Mandlik was the first among the intellectuals to enter the Council in 1874, and he continued to be nominated to the Bombay Council till 1884. V N Mandlik was followed by S S Bengali (1876-78), D F Karaka (1877-79), Gopal Hari Deshmukh (1880-82), Badruddin Tyabjee (1882-86), M G Ranade (1885-87), Dadabhai Naoroji (1885) and Pherozeshaw Mehta in 1887.[20]

It is noteworthy that of these eight names of western-educated Indians nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council between 1874 and 1887, five were Freemasons: the important reformer, Bengali—initiated 1862;[21] Karaka—initiated 1861;[22] Justice

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[18] 1882, the year of his first appointment to the L.C., was also the year Tyabji became Master of Lodge *Islam*—see list of Past Masters in Lodge *Islam's* "Programme of the 112th Regular Installation Meeting" for 1988 (Islam P.R.I.M.). Courtesy of Mr. Mufazzal S. Federal. Fergusson said of Tyabji that his speeches "would have been listened to with great attention even in the British Parliament"—see C.B. Burrows, *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 2nd ed., 98.

[19] P.V. Ranade, "Mhowra Flowers and Deccan Patriots: Bombay Legislature Rhetoric, 1882-1892," in S.C. Malik (ed.), *Determinants of Social Status in India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 93.

[20] Ibid.

[21] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 131. Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengali (1831-93) rose, "by dint of ability and integrity" to become one of the "foremost citizens of Bombay." "He was a J.P., a Member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and the Legislative Council, Sheriff and C.I.E. He worked for the reform in social customs amongst the natives, for the propagation of literary and physical pursuits, for the introduction of European women doctors in Bombay, and it was owing to his exertions that the Indian

Tyabji—an early member of Lodge *Islam* (est. 1876);[23] and Naoroji and Mehta, who were already long-time Masons and both members of *Rising Star*.[24] Although V.N. Mandlik was not a Mason, and in fact became a traditionalist conservative in later years, his son, Narayan Vishvanath Mandlik, would become a Mason in *Aryan* in 1907,[25] as would, it appears, Deshmukh's son, in 1874.[26]

After Fergusson, the next governor who was a Mason was Lord Sandhurst, who took office in 1897, and who also ruled as the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India (G.L.A.S.F.I.) and the District Grand Master of the English-Constitution lodges in the Bombay Presidency. In political life, Sandhurst is significant because he was preceded as Governor by Lord Harris (1890-95), a "Curzonian figure" who had "little sympathy for the western educated group,"[27] and who viewed the I.N.C. as unrepresentative and unable to speak for the masses of Indians.[28] While Harris, therefore, dragged his feet regarding the enfranchisement of municipalities of the Central Division of the Bombay Presidency, which included Poona, Sandhurst reversed this policy, and his attitude towards the western-educated Indians of Bombay is clearly shown

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Factories Act of 1881 became law"—H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, vol. 1 (Bombay: G. Claridge and Co., Ltd., 1939), 332.

[22] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 129. Karaka was "the first Indian Chief Magistrate (Acting) in 1874, the first Indian Chairman of the Bombay Municipality, 1875, and a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council. He took a very active part in the public life of Bombay, and his 'History of the Parsis' is even today considered a monumental work...."—H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, 152.

[23] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India* (New Delhi: Indian Masonic Publications, 1981), ch. 4, 52.

[24] Naoroji was initiated in Lodge *Rising Star* in 1854. See Membership List for Lodge *Rising Star* (MLRS), entry no. 148. Mehta was affiliated to *Rising Star* in 1869, but was initiated in Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie* in London sometime before this. See MLRS, entry no. 252. Besides this, Mehta had already joined *Aryan* before 1880. See Membership Registry of Lodge *Aryan* (MRA), entry #35. Also, G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 54.

[25] See MRA, entry #184.

[26] One "Krishnarow Gopal Deshmook," is listed as having joined Aryan in 1878 from Lodge *Concord*, where he was initiated in 1874. He died in 1882. See MRA, entry #12.

[27] Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya, 45.

[28] Whatever else may be said of Lord Harris and his views of western-educated Indians, he nevertheless did try to bring the colonizer and colonized together through cricket, and "helped lay the foundations of what later became the Quadrangular tournament [i.e., Britons vs. Parsis vs. Hindus vs. Muslims]" in Bombay. Harris stated: "'East will always be East, and West, West, but the [batting] crease is not a very broad line of demarcation—so narrow, indeed, that it ought to help bring about friendly relations'"—see Ramchandra Guha, "Cricket and Politics in Colonial India," in *Past and Present*, no. 161 (November 1998): 165.

by three visits to Lodge *Rising Star*, and in his appointment of two of its members to his Legislative Council—Naoroji Nasarwanji Wadia, and the barrister Abdulla Dharamsi (1857-97), whom Sandhurst called "not only a distinguished citizen but also... a clever and skilful professional man and a zealous and painstaking member of the Legislative Council."[29] Dharamsi was appointed in the place of another Mason, Rahimtulla M. Sayani, whose term of office had expired and who was later appointed to the Viceroy's Legislative Council.[30] In February 1900, at a joint meeting of the District Grand Lodge (E.C.) and the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, Sandhurst replied to the various tributes given him and, echoing the sentiments of Justice N.G. Chandavarkar, who had spoken previously, said:

> In no country in the world do we need Freemasonry more than in India. The more the opportunities we get of being brought together in India and thoroughly understanding one another the better it will be for all of us. We need to understand one another in order to appreciate one another's good qualities, to sweep away the froth of public life and to uphold what is sterling and good. And that is the backbone of Freemasonry.[31]

In these words, we can already perceive a concern regarding the political climate of India—no doubt because of Tilak's activities—and a desire to see Freemasonry reverse this.

In 1910, two more members of Lodge *Rising Star*—Sir Fazulbhai Currimbhai Ibrahim, a wealthy merchant,[32] and Dr. Temulji Bhicaji Nariman[33]—were appointed members of the Bombay Legislative Council under Governor George Clarke.[34] Although

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[29] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 288. N.N. Wadia affiliated to *Rising Star* in 1897 and died December 19, 1899—see Wadia, 284, 288, 298.

[30] See C.B. Burrows, *Representative Men of the Bombay Presidency*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Historical Publishing Co., 1900), 83.

[31] In K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 37.

[32] Initiated in *Rising Star* in 1894. See Membership List for Lodge *Rising Star* (MLRS), entry #362. Also D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 275.

[33] Initiated in *Rising Star* in 1878. See MLRS, entry #291. Also D.F. Wadia, 205. Bhicajee and Currimbhai Ibrahim would also become co-founders of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* in 1908, and Nariman would become the first Indian Grand Master in the country, serving as "ruler" of the G.L.A.S.F.I. from 1932-38.

[34] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 337.

Clarke does not seem to have been a Mason, other British officials in the Presidency would have been, and, based on a knowledge of these Indians through lodge interactions, it is quite likely that they put their names forward to the Governor for nomination. In any event, Lodge *Rising Star* was clearly became the lodge of choice to supply western-educated Indians for the Bombay Legislative Council.

III. INDIAN MASONS AND THE DEMAND FOR RESPECT AND PARITY

Appointments to high government office, as well as chumminess with officials and Royals also explains why Indians who had called British imperial administrators—and even a member of the Royal Family[35]—"brother" in the lodge were anxious to be treated according to Masonic ideals of equality, fraternity, and status based on character and merit, rather than on the color of their skin.

What the western-educated Indians of the 19th century were demanding, among other things, was the development of a liberal democratic system of government for India, where Indians would be able to participate at the highest echelons "on the level" with their British partners. In the "profane" world, Indians often had to deal with a lack of parity. A notorious example of this centered on how Indians were to show respect for the British in official places:

> The "shoe question" has been decided as regards Bengal, by an order of the Government of India that natives wearing boots and shoes after the European fashion shall be at liberty to enter the presence of any British officer without removing them, as they are allowed to do in Government House at Calcutta, but that when the shoes are of native fashion, the old social practice will be maintained.[36]

The resolution to the "shoe question" is interesting for its division between Indians who dressed in the western style and those who wore traditional garb. This is not to say that the British necessarily liked Indians more who mimicked them. The Westernized Indian

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[35] I.e., the Duke of Connaught.

[36] *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 1 (April 1868): 22.

could be both flattering and irksome to the British. The oft-disparaged Bengali *babus* are a case in point: the British viewed them as effeminate, deracinated, and out of touch with the mass of Indians (whose self-appointed protectors the British claimed to be). The British needed the *babus*, yet at the same time despised them. Thus, attempting to look like the British "self" was not always appreciated. However, relations between the British and the western-educated in Bombay were seen by both sides to be better than in Bengal. But even in Bengal the resolution to the "shoe question" suggests a cultural privileging of those who assimilated to Western styles of dress and perhaps even represents a coercive attempt in that direction. At the same time, the British were also constructing "traditional" garb for various Indian groups (as they had with the Scots) in a way that represented them as an exotic "Other."[37] Yet, it was clear that not all wanted to be cast in the role of the permanent Other.[38] Even as far away as Afghanistan, Amir Sher Ali in 1870 "commanded the shoemakers of Cabul to make shoes after the English pattern, or shut up shop."[39]

Western-educated Indians thus understood the connection between their dress and their proximity to the British "Self" in the Raj.

A. Freemasonry, Clothing, and "Civilization":

Indian Masons were no less ignorant of the role of dress in the construction of "brotherhood" in the Lodge. On the eve of the Prince of Wales' visit to India in 1875, a heated discussion occurred among the Parsis of Lodge *Rising Star* over a circular which had been issued by a committee of G.L.A.S.F.I. regarding how native "brothers" should dress for a Masonic parade. It was common in the High Raj period to dress up Indians in native costumes for imperial pageants. In 1875, the G.L.A.S.F.I. and D.G.L. of Bombay

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[37] See Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 116-17: "By the 1860s... ideas of 'difference' defined an India that had become a 'laboratory of mankind' or 'living museum', where ancient customs, habits, and practices endured up to the present." Indian groups/castes were also categorized and "fixed" according to British descriptions of their physiognomy, dress, and manners.

[38] Especially the western-educated Indians. See Metcalf, 119.

[39] "General Intelligence" for April 1870, in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 1 (April 1870): 61.

(E.C.) were planning the Masonic stone-laying ceremony for the Prince's Dock, which was to be carried out by the Prince of Wales, Grand Master of England and Patron of Scottish Freemasonry. A committee set up to plan the ceremonies decreed that Parsi Masons in these two bodies (there was only one Muslim and no Hindus in both these higher administrative bodies at this time) were to wear their Parsi "full dress," the *jama pichhori*, along with Masonic accoutrements. At the Grand Lodge meeting a few days before the event, an upset Parsi, Ratanji Manekji Ratnaghar

> said that he wished to make a few remarks about the Parsee Brethren appearing in Jama Pichoree, with Masonic Clothing, at the approaching ceremony..., and he knew there were numbers of Parsees who thought the order an arbitrary one, and it appeared to be done to make them look ridiculous, and he thought the Committee should reconsider their case, calling on some Parsee Brethren to give advice, and let them appear as they *did* at *Lodge*.[40]

The *jama pichhori* consisted of a long white cotton coat (*jama*) bound at the waist with a broad band of white muslin (*pichhori*) passed several times around the waist. The 19th century saw many changes in the Parsi dress, and it appears that in the late 19th century, Bombay Parsi men wore primarily the *angarkha*, a long upper-body garment "without any waist-band over it[;] the sleeves... being twice as long as the arm," were tucked up in creases upon the wrists.[41] Photos from the 1860s also show Parsi men wearing dark long coats and baggy, *pajama*-like trousers. By the early 20th century, Bombay Parsi men had begun wearing English-style coats in large numbers, while the *angarkha* predominated in smaller towns. Apparently, in the 1870s, Bombay Parsi Masons wore either *angarkhas* or some kind of transitional outfit in lodge meetings.[42] The *jama picchori* came to be used only for the most formal occasions, such as marriages or funerals.[43] It was probably

[40] From minutes for the Regular Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge of All-Scottish Freemasonry in India, for October 23, 1875; in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 9 (Dec. 1875): 368.

[41] M.M. Murzban, *The Parsis: Being an Enlarged and Copiously Annotated Up To Date English Edition of Mlle. Delphine Menant's* Les Parsis, vol. 2 (1917; republished Bombay: Danai, 1994), 289-90.

[42] Gandhi speaks of a "brown coat after the Parsi fashion" worn by Narayan Hemachandra in London in the late 1880s. See Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, trans. Mahadev Desai (New York: Dover Publications, 1983), 64. This suggests that Gujarati Hindus were copying Parsis in modernizing their dress.

[43] M.M. Murzban, *The Parsis*, 290.

because of this formal use that the committee planning the event wanted the Parsis to wear the outfit. Interestingly, the committee had two Parsis among its members,[44] so either they, too, had no problem with it, or they were absent from the meeting which decided the dress issue. Many Parsis like Ratnaghar, though, even if they accepted wearing the *jama picchori* for this formal occasion, thought that mixing it with the Masonic gloves and aprons would make them look clownish.

Manekji Cursetji, the first Indian Mason in Bombay, then joined the attack, revealing what he thought constituted civilized dress:

> A number of Brethren have asked me to take part in these proceedings against a most arbitrary order. If I had been asked, I should say that I was certainly opposed to the Parsees appearing as they do now at Lodges in that mongrel costume, part Parsee, part Portuguese, part English; some in white, some in blue, and some in green; but I object to the Jama Pichoree, it being *a relic of the past*, and really a Mohamedan dress. When I attended the Grand Lodge of England, R.W. Sir, I was dressed exactly as I am now, and on that night, to pay me honor, the Earl of Zetland [i.e., the then-Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, 1844-70] for the first time put on the Founder's Medal of Lodge "Rising Star." I think that each Parsee Brother should wear Black Coat, Black Trowsers, and White Gloves, but that they should not be asked to take off their Hats, for what is a mark of respect in this sense with you, is a mark of disrespect with us, and I really think that if the Parsee Brethren wish to improve their dress *and become more civilized*, why should you try to drive them back *into their old antiquated dress*, in which they appear ridiculous.[45]

A colonial dilemma, indeed! Indians like Cursetji had internalized the colonial/western discourse which said that modernity and "civilization" meant wearing western clothes instead of something that belonged to an "uncivilized" past, and he wanted Parsis to reform themselves in matters of dress. And having thus become "civilized" such men were in no mood to be pushed back into the realm of the "Other." Moreover Cursetji, having experienced British prejudice when he first attempted to become a Mason in the early 1840s, no doubt recognized the danger of remaining an Oriental "Other" in British eyes, and he deeply resented being forced to wear clothing that would do this. This

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[44] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 195.

[45] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 9 (Dec. 1875): 368-69 (my italics).

would have undermined, he no doubt thought, the Masonic project of universal brotherhood and parity he had fought so hard to advance in Bombay.

However, even for Cursetji there were limits to how westernized Indians needed to become in order to be related to the British "Self," for, while insisting on wearing a hat, he resisted having to doff it as a sign of respect, as Westerners do, citing cultural differences! It appears that Cursetji, while wanting to be modern, did not want to be completely Western—he wanted the trappings of the West, which represented modernity, but not necessarily *all* the Western cultural forms and gestures. Also, the hat which Cursetji was talking about was most likely not a western-style hat (I have never seen pictures of him wearing such a hat), but rather some Parsi headdress (of which there were three. A bust of Cursetjee in the Freemasons' Hall of Bombay shows him wearing one of these three hats, the *fenta*). This represents a concession to—or rather an *assertion of*—a certain amount of cultural autonomy for Indians while still assimilating quite far in the direction of western dress.

In any case, the matter seems to have not been due to some conspiracy to keep Indians in the position of a permanent "Other." The Deputy Grand Master, Bro. Balfour, merely stated that white gloves were not ordered as some innovation to the Parsi full dress, but as a Masonic "emblem of innocence, and it was a very strict order at home that all Brethren attending Grand Lodge must appear in Full Dress and White Gloves, and by deviating from that order on the present occasion, they would be showing great disrespect to His Royal Highness." There were a few more comments by others, and then the matter was referred to the committee in question. There being no further business the meeting "was closed in peace and harmony, with solemn prayer, at 8 p.m."[46] One can sympathize somewhat with the committee, however, for in deciding on a formal outfit for the Parsi brethren, were they to impose on them a fully western dress, as Manekji Cursetji believed Parsis should wear, or were they to accept what most Parsis actually considered as formal

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[46] Ibid.: 369.

attire for special occasions? Clearly, even though there is no evidence of an attempt to impose "difference," this episode shows that the western-educated Indians were quite touchy about possibly being made to look ridiculous, or, in Cursetji's case, about being "driven back" into wearing an antiquated dress which betokened a lack of "civilization" and elicited condescension from the British.[47]

In matters of religion, too, Indian Masons could insist on making sure that Christian Masons treated other religions with respect in the lodge

> At one of the meetings of Lodge *Hiram* [No. 1784, E.C., Bombay] in 1881, Bro. P.M. Jeejeebhoy brought to the notice of the W.M. [i.e., Worshipful Master] that the Zend Avesta (Parsi Sacred Writings) was not on the pedestal along with the Bible. He stated that in Parsi Lodges it was the practice to have both these volumes open and that this should always be done in Lodge *Hiram* as it had a number of Parsi members.[48]

Such issues were important areas for Indians seeking cultural parity with, and respect from, Britons. For it was in the internalization of, and in reaction to, the British "gaze" that Indians constructed their nationalism.

B. Indian Parity in Masonic Administration in Bombay:

As important as the issue of British respect for Indians was the closely connected subject of the political role western-educated Indians were going to play in the government of the Raj. And Indian Masons had analogous concerns regarding their position *vis a vis* the British in the Masonic world. In contrast to the Raj, though, Indians could gain a considerable amount of recognition from their British "brothers" in the government of Freemasonry. Thus, in Poona in 1870:

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[47] The idea of a "national dress" for different Indian communities persisted among Masons well into the 20th century. At the installation of the new Master for Lodge *Cyrus* in 1927, the summons asked all Parsi lodge members to "come in their national dress of Long Coat with Turbans or Fentas. A special request was made to Mohamedan brethren to put on their Extra Long coat and Golden Paghdis"—see Jehangir Framroz Shroff, "Hundred Glorious Years: Historical Sketch of Lodge Cyrus, No. 1359, E.C.," in "Lodge *Cyrus*, No. 1359 , E.C., Centenary Celebrations, 1871-1971" souvenir (privately issued in Bombay, 1971), 25. (Courtesy of Mr. Homi F. Colombowala, District Grand Secretary, of D.G.L. of India, Scottish Constitution).

[48] K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 28.

> The brethren of Lodge *St. Andrew's* have elected Bro. Dorabjee Hormusjee as their Worshipful Master for the ensuing year. This is the first Parsee brother who has had the honour of being elected W.M. of a Lodge, the majority of whose members are Europeans. It reflects great credit on the members of Lodge *St. Andrew's*; for as the Parsee brethren take part in all the labours of the Lodge, it is but right that they should share the honours also, when proved worthy[49]

Especially important to Indian Masons, though, were the offices they would be allowed to hold in the upper levels of the government of the Raj, and here, too, there is a Masonic analog, for Indians were anxious to obtain high offices in the Masonic district bodies in Bombay. By 1873, we find a number of Indians—as yet only Parsis (there were only a handful of Hindu Masons in Bombay at this time and not that many Muslims)—serving in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India under Scotland:

> At the Regular Communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India held at the Scottish Masonic Hall, on Saturday the 25th day of January 1873, there were present—Rt. Wor. Bro. Henry Morland, Provincial Grand Master; Macintosh Balfour, Depute P.G.M.; *K.R. Cama*, Substitute P.G. Master; *Manockjee Cursetjee*, Honorary Sub. P.G. Master; *M.C. Murzban*, P.G. Senior Warden; W.B. Johnston, P.G. Junior Warden; Bros. *J.D. Wadia*, P.G. Treasurer; J.W. Butler, P.G. Secretary; J. Green, P.G. Clerk; C. Matthews, P.G. Chaplain; Rt. Wor. Bros. E. Freeborn, P.G. Senior Deacon; *Ruttonjee Manockjee*, P.G. Junior Deacon; Bros. E.M. Walton, P.G. Bible Bearer; E. DeSouza, P.G. Director of Music; *P.M. Mehta*, P.G. 1st Steward; *Nowrojee Dossabhoy*, P.G. 2nd Steward; D. Cameron, P.G. 2nd Marshall; G. Yardley, P.G. Inner Guard; *Cowasjee Patell,* as P.G. Tyler; and representatives from all the Lodges in Bombay.[50]

Eight (perhaps nine, if DeSouza was a Goan or East Indian) out of nineteen of the above Provincial Grand Lodge officers were Indians; and although not attaining the highest position of Grand Master, Indians were coming close and also occupying important positions, for example, the office of treasurer.

This process had begun before Henry Morland became Provincial Grand Master. In October 1867, a deputation of eight Parsi members of Lodge *Rising Star* presented an address to the then Provincial Grand Master for Scotland, Richard Bolton Barton, on the

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[49] *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 9 (December 1870): 322-23.

[50] Minutes of Provincial G.L. of Western India (S.C.) for January 25, 1873, in *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 12 (March 1873): 476 (my italics). Note Pherozeshah M. Mehta as Provincial Grand First Steward.

eve of his departure for England on sick leave. In the address they congratulated him on his appointment of Indians to the P.G.L.:

> Above all, you were the first to take the opportunity of introducing some of our Members into the Provincial Grand Lodge; and what gratifies us the more is this, that in a spirit truly Masonic, you hesitated not to offer posts of trust and honour to those who deserved them. In thus acknowledging worth and merit whenever and wherever they could be found, you have exemplified in your person the truth of what we as Masons are constantly taught within our lodges, *that in Masonry advancement is by worth and merit alone.*[51]

In 1865, for example, Barton had appointed ten Parsis and a partner of David Sassoon, A.M. Gubbay (probably a Baghdadi Jew), to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (S.C.).[52] The total membership was 36, which means that the Parsis constituted 28 percent of the total membership of the P.G.L. Also, the important post of P.G. Secretary was given to an Indian, K.R. Cama.

In his response to the above address, Barton said that he appointed Parsis from *Rising Star* because of his high esteem for their "superior working in their lodge," which confirms that he based his choice on merit. In closing, he declared that after returning to England he would remember the "joyful evenings spent among my Native brethren in Masonry in Bombay," and he invited the deputation to "sip a glass of wine together, which done, the entire deputation sat down and partook of tiffin with Bro. and Mrs. Barton."[53] Barton was the Chief Magistrate of Bombay, and this breaking of bread together (in the company of Mrs. Barton, no less) once again demonstrates the intimate access to officialdom that Freemasonry offered Indians (recall, too, Lord Sandhurst taking a meal with Indian lodge members—see Chapter 7).

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51 "Address to R.W. Bro. R.B. Barton," by a "Deputation of Brethren of Lodge *Rising Star*," September 7, 1867; in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 7 (October 1867): 245 (my italics).

52 *MRWI*, vol. 1, no. 11 (February 1865): 430. The 36 officers represent an expanded description of the P.G.L., where even minor functionaries are listed. In most reports, only the main officers are listed. In September 1867, for example, only 13 of the P.G.L. officers are listed (of these, five were Indians—all Parsis, as Hindus were still not being made Masons, and Muslims were few in relation to the Parsis). See minutes of the Quarterly Communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India under Scotland, for September 28, 1867; in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 10 (January 1868): 367.

53 Ibid.: 246.

In the above address, Indians are explicitly stating—and Barton is confirming—that Masonry instills in Indians and Europeans alike the principle that advancement is to be merit-based. Of course, it would be some time before Indians ruled the districts as Grand Masters, but Indians seemed willing to accept that for the time being. Merit-based advancement is a fundamental point in the theory of modern bureaucratic government, and a key element in societal rationalization, as described by Max Weber. Secondly, we see that Masonry actually made good on this principle, through the appointments made by Provincial Grand Masters like Barton.

When we consider that the British government in India was *not* following through on Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, which promised Indians equality of opportunity in government service, it seems reasonable to expect that the experience of Indian Masons in their lodges and in the higher Masonic administration would have put the proverbial bit between their teeth in attempting to make the Raj truly meritocratic (in, for example, Civil Service appointments—more of which later). As K.R. Cama described the situation in 1877, "our Lodges offer a fair scope for the proper display of the talents of a rising man, and secure for him a proper field for his ambition, which elsewhere [in government, no doubt] might not be ready at his disposal. These are some of the advantages gained to the native community, during the past, through the beneficent medium of Freemasonry."[54] When such Indians had been called "brother" in the P.G.L. by official Britons (like the Chief Magistrate of Bombay, Barton), and had worked with British "officials" on terms of trust, intimacy, and respect, would they—could they—really be satisfied in dealing with them any differently in the government of the Bombay Presidency? This leveling effect of Freemasonry is ultimately subversive of colonial rule, where the colonizer sees himself in a permanent position of superiority. The Masons of Bengal seemed to recognize this danger when they strove so hard to keep Asiatics out of the Craft in the 1860s (see Chapter 3), for they no doubt realized that such

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[54] Kharshedji R. Cama, "A Discourse on Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay," 8.

equality cannot be contained within the lodge forever. The psychological effect of meeting "on the level" in lodge with one's social and political superiors cannot be turned off like a light switch. Unlike non-Masonic Indians, who could only imagine it, Indian Masons had actually tasted the heady brew of equality with the British colonizer in the subversive space of the lodge.

Although no Indian would occupy the supreme leadership of any higher administrative body of Craft Masonry in any part of India until the 1930s, such was not the case with Royal Arch Masonry, which is a higher grade Masonry open to, and popular among, Masons who have attained the third degree (it is said to complete the Master's grade). In 1892, K.R. Cama was elected to succeed Henry Morland (who had also been Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India) as Grand Superintendent (i.e., the head, also known as the Provincial Grand "Z") of the "Provincial Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Freemasonry of Western India"—a position he was to hold until 1908. When the head of the Royal Arch Order of Scotland, Lord Saltoun, came to India, K.R. Cama addressed him in a speech:

> It is a peculiar pleasure to me, a Native of the soil, that this auspicious event of your Lordship's advent among us has happened whilst I have the honour to hold the Chair of the Provincial Grand 'Z'.... [L]ast night, whilst referring to the peculiar sight your Lordship saw in the Grand Lodge [i.e., the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India] of how different Nationalities, castes and creeds had there mingled together, illustrating the true principles of Masonry, which admit of no distinction *save that of merit and worth*, you casually let fall an expression of hope that Masonry may yet more largely flourish among the Indians, and that one day the Grand Master's Chair might be filled by a son of the soil. M[ost] Ex[cellent] Comp[anion], you see to-night your hope so far as it may extend to Royal Arch Masonry is already realized in fact.[55]

C. *Rising Star's* Members of Parliament:

In the last century, India produced two Members of Parliament—Dadabhai Naoroji and Muncherji Bhownagri. Both were initiates and members of Lodge *Rising*

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[55] "Souvenir and Program" for the 150-year anniversary of the Grand Chapter of United Royal Arch Freemasonry in India and Ceylon, April 10, 1987, pp. 35-36 (my italics). Courtesy of Mr. Anil Pradhan.

Star of Western India. More than anything else, this clearly demonstrates that the efforts of Maneckji Cursetji to open the doors of Freemasonry to Indians back in the 1840s was fraught with political significance. With the election of two of *Rising Star's* members to Parliament within a half century of the lodge's founding, the Indian empire had come home to the metropole in triumphant glory. To what extent was Masonry a vehicle for this? Did their Masonic membership help Naoroji and Bhownagri in their successful campaigns? We will probably never know, but the fact that both Indian M.P.s came from the same lodge in Bombay seems more than a coincidence. Also, the Lodge was not slow to congratulate its sons upon their elections. These were moments of exceeding pride for western-educated Indians generally, and reinforced the hope that they could become equal members of the imperial system.

C. 1. Dadabhai Naoroji (M.P., 1892-95)

Annie Besant writes that when Naoroji was elected President of the Congress in 1893, "the whole pavilion was shaken with the welcome the delegates offered to the first Indian elected to the House of Commons."[56] A few days earlier, on Dec. 15, when Lodge *Rising Star* celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, Naoroji attended. K.R. Cama lectured on the history of the lodge and made special mention of Naoroji, his old friend and fellow-reformer, saying that

> a man of his determination and courage as shown by the public movements of the time in which he took a prominent part, was sure to have rendered vast services to Masonry, but that unfortunately however for Masonry in general and this lodge in particular, but happily for himself and his countrymen, he had a Mission to leave India for England just at that time when he was pitchforked into the Secretaryship of the lodge, soon after his having been made a Master Mason [in 1854], that while there he joined Lodge Dalhousie and became its first native Master, and thereafter became an active member of a couple of lodges in Finsbury (which to the gratification of the teeming millions of India returned him to the British

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[56] Annie Besant, *How India Wrought For Freedom: The Story of the National Congress Told From Official Records* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1915), 163. Besant dedicated this book to the "Motherland," and to Dadabhai Naoroji.

> Parliament, to enter which seems to have been an ambition of his life) always keeping his interest in the Craft up to date.[57]

The Masons of Bombay, it seems, were no less well-pleased than the Congress at Naoroji's reaching what they considered to be the ultimate in political parity with the British. As D.F. Wadia, writing in 1911, put it: "He was the first native of India who secured a seat... in that august assembly the doors of which until then were taken as locked to Indians, and the lodge unanimously voted an address to him... expressing its great joy at the event *which marked a new era in the history of India*."[58] The language of parity again! The fact that Naoroji was, as Cama says, a member of a couple of lodges in Finsbury, where he was elected to Parliament, raises the intriguing question of whether or not there might have been some help rendered him by members of these lodges in his campaign activities.

C. 2. Muncherji Merwanji Bhownagri (M.P., 1895-1906)

Sir M.M. Bhownagri, the second M.P. of Indian origin—elected from Bethnal Green—was also a member of Lodge *Rising Star*, and its Master in 1888-89.[59] Thus, despite the fact that he and Naoroji were opposed in their choice of political parties, yet they were sons of the same mother lodge. Although Bhownagri won his seat as a Conservative, and although his name was perverted by opponents into "Bow 'n' Agree," nevertheless, Bhownagri was not one to concede any inherent inferiority for Indians, as suggested by a eulogy he gave on January 7, 1888 in the "lodge of sorrow" for Manekji Cursetji, who died in 1887. Bhownagri recounted Cursetji's life and his successful efforts "in opening the portals of Freemasonry to his countrymen in Western India with great perseverance and unselfishness and with a fearless and courageous spirit and against the opposition made by some of the leading Europeans of the time against fraternising with natives."[60] While in Britain in 1883, Bhownagri was nominated as Proxy Master to

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[57] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 272.
[58] Ibid., 262 (my italics)
[59] Ibid., xxiv.
[60] Ibid., 246.

represent the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India at the Grand Lodge of Scotland.[61] In 1895, Lodge *Rising Star* "rejoiced" at Bhownagri's election to Parliament—"the second native of India" to do so—"which brought the highest honours again to one of its members, and [the lodge] addressed to him a special letter of congratulation and it also passed a special resolution of welcome when this Brother visited it after his return from England in the following year."[62] In 1900, D.F. Wadia writes that

> Brother Bhownugree was this year for the second time returned to Parliament by his North Bethnal Green constituency, and the lodge passed a resolution expressing satisfaction at the re-election and voting a letter of congratulation to the distinguished Brother and requesting him to convey to his electors the best thanks of the lodge for the honour.[63]

It is noteworthy that the lodge members felt Bhownagri's electors had done the lodge an honor by electing him. When he returned for a short time to Bombay Bhownagri was appointed Honorary Grand Master Depute of A.S.F.I.[64]

For the members of *Rising Star* it didn't much matter that Bhownagri was a Tory and Naoroji a Liberal—both were equally praised. What *was* important was that two of their members had achieved racial and political parity with the British at the center of power in the British state. This was consonant with the Masonic principles they espoused, for the members of *Rising Star* obviously felt that such principles meant that they could, and should, be "brothers" in government, as well.

IV. <u>LODGE, NATION, AND SOCIETY</u>

The remainder of this chapter looks at the kind of Indian nation and government that western-educated Indians would have been inspired to "imagine" (in the Andersonian sense) by reason of their experiences in the Masonic lodge, for an important feature of the

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[61] Ibid., 230.
[62] Ibid., 280.
[63] Ibid., 301-02.
[64] Ibid., 305.

imagined nation, aside from its ethnic composition and religious orientation, is the moral and intellectual character of the nation.[65] The first article of the Indian National Congress' aims and objectives would, in 1885, call for, "developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country."[66] Among other things, then, the aim of western-educated Indians was to create the "citizen," the constituent unit of the nation, who could be morally self-sustaining and intellectually original, and who would form the basic unit for a new society. In the early 18th century, when the Grand Lodge was established (1717), England

> was just emerging from a long period of political and religious strife and the Lodges were the only places where men of all persuasions could meet in amity and enjoy each others' company. Few men could read or write. Drunkenness was rampant.... No fewer than 160 crimes were punishable by death, and public executions drew large crowds. The Lodges set out to improve the moral standards of their members and of the masses.[67]

Freemasons were thus keenly aware of the role they were expected to play in the process of remaking society:

> In a utilitarian age, like the present, no institution however venerable—no system however deep-rooted or widely extended—can hope to escape that crucial test of criticism which is expressed in the somewhat cynical words, *"qui bono?"* To fancy that freemasonry is an exception to this wholesale rule, is to deceive ourselves; on the contrary it is from a society like ours that the world expects most, and mainly because the influence of Masonic teachings is supposed to be as powerful as it is pure.[68]

This section will examine the intellectual and moral development of the individual and society which Freemasonry tried to inculcate, and the role of Indian Freemasons in advancing it.

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[65] This was something which also greatly exercised Gandhi in his attempts to discipline the Indian masses and thereby make them worthy of independence.

[66] See above for First Article of the Constitution of the Indian National Congress.

[67] Ernest Beha, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Freemasonry* (London: Arco Publications, 1962), 111-12.

[68] "The Mission of Freemasonry," in *London Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 1 (April 1872): 9.

A. The Good Citizen and the Masonic Inculcation of Civic Virtues:

In 1871, Ardaseer Goostajee, the Parsi Master of Lodge *Harmony* in Karachi, gave a lecture to his lodge in which he said: that "'Masonry and civilization, like twin sisters, have always gone hand in hand together,' and that everything that could embellish and improve human life have followed with unerring steps in their halcyon train."[69] Goostajee makes Freemasonry responsible for the spread of civilization—not just in India, but from the most ancient times—an old refrain that dates back at least to Anderson's *Constitutions* of the early 1700s. The symbols and mysteries of Freemasonry, Goostajee said,

> indicate that the true object of Masonry is to unite us to the performance of virtuous deeds, the accomplishments of which testifies to the world that *as sons of Light* we have dispelled the dark clouds that otherwise would have obscured us, and that being no longer lost in the mist of hatred, malice, drunkenness, and other hideous sins which degrade the mind and destroy the body, and render the hereafter a dreadful source of anticipation, we prefer the labour of charity, benevolence, brotherly love, and the exercise of every other virtue.[70]

Summarizing the various features of Masonry and the effects they have on Masons, he concludes "if our justice is to render us *better citizens of the State* and better fit for the social intercourse of man; how indispensably does it become us both collectively and individually to be vigilant in the performance of our duty...."[71] Goostajee thus draws a connection between individual morality (combined with religion) and the good citizen of the state—a relationship which according to him was fostered by Freemasonry. Whether the state is an imperial one or a national one is irrelevant, for Masonry clearly can serve the interests of both types of states through its production of good subjects/citizens. It is interesting that Goostajee speaks not of subjects of the Crown, but of citizens, even though Indians were actually imperial subjects. This shows how far the idea of "the citizen" had progressed among Indian Masons in the mid-19th century, and one wonders

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[69] *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 11 (February 1871): 437.

[70] Ibid. (my italics).

[71] Ibid.: 438 (my italics).

to what extent they were aware of French Masonic literature, which had a tendency to reflect the language of the French Revolution. Of course Masonry, as we have seen elsewhere, also promoted the idea of being an obedient subject, but it was transforming the *subjugated* subject into an *autonomous* and morally self-sustaining subject (one who freely gave his obedience to the Crown), thereby making him a free citizen in the modern sense. It did this through various means, one of which was ritual. According to the United Grand Lodge of England, "Masonic ceremonies are secular morality plays...."[72]

B. Time, Labor, Punctuality, and "Standards":

Another way Masonry created the modern citizen who was a member of a rationalized modern state was through new notions of time, labor, and standards. According to Benedict Anderson, it would be short-sighted "to think of the imagined communities of nations as simply growing out of and replacing religious communities and dynastic realms. Beneath the decline of sacred communities, languages and lineages, a fundamental change was taking place in modes of apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to 'think' the nation."[73] An important change was the modern conception of "simultaneity," which is marked by "temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar."[74]

To this we may add Weber, who speaks of the value of time in European Protestantism, and the wasting of time as a sin.[75] With new ways of dividing and using time came new ideas about "standards." In the colonial context, Eugene Irschick argues

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72 "What Freemasonry Is—What is Freemasonry?" <http://www.grand-lodge.org/wfi.htm> (Official Website of the United Grand Lodge of England) [Accessed October 4, 1999].

73 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 22.

74 Ibid., 24. As noted earlier, this was associated with the rise of the novel and newspaper, both of which were vehicles for newer notions of time and simultaneity. They helped to spawn a mass community of readers, thanks to print-capitalism, and required the standardization of print languages and the choice of print dialects. Interestingly, Anderson argues that books preceded textiles as the first object of mass-production technology. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 33-34.

75 See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 157-58: "Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election. Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health, six to at most eight hours, is worthy of absolute moral condemnation."

that the invocation of "standards" in work skills is a "strategy to help make an effective ethnic boundary" between the colonizer and the colonized.[76] Freemasonry was a vehicle for the inculcation of such standards, and—with its emphasis on industry, symbolized by the bee; on the disciplined and productive use of time; and on quality craftsmanship, symbolized by the Craft itself (derived as it was from operative masons)—Freemasonry served to blur the Self/Other dichotomy in the minds of British Masons, promoting instead a respect for Indian Masons (recall Barton's reasons for appointing Indians to the Provincial Grand Lodge). And it promoted a sense of parity on the part of Indians. That is, by means of the very criteria that had been used to create the "Other," Freemasonry created instead the "Brother."

B. 1. The Use of Time:

Masons promoted an almost monastic use of time, exhorting a member to divide his day in a productive way. In a poem, entitled "The 24-Inch Gauge," (which seems to have been taken from the *Freemason* magazine of St. Louis, Missouri) found in the *Masonic Record* in 1871, a Mason is exhorted to spend eight hours a day for his normal work (clearly an early call for the eight-hour workday), eight eight hours for "sleep and refreshment," and eight for the worship of God and the relief, or aid, of "Brothers true": "Thus nobly should we e'er divide our time/And Worship, Work, Relief, and Rest combine."[77]

B. 2. Punctuality:

A corollary of such a rigid and monastic regime concerning the use of time is the notion of punctuality. Masonry stressed this trait. In the *Masonic Record* for August 1876, for example, we find the Grand Master of A.S.F.I., Henry Morland, complaining of

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[76] Eugene F. Irschick, "Order and Disorder in Colonial South India," in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1989), 459-92: 480.

[77] *MRWI*, vol. 8, no. 4 (July 1871): 140. Another division of the day has been set down more recently by a Nigerian Mason, who argues for "6 hours for thanksgiving to God[,] 6 hours for Labour[,] 6 hours for Refreshment[,] 6 hours for sleep."—Adewale Thompson, *Masonic Priorities: Time, Truth, Temple and Taste With the First Gregorian Calendar* (Ibaban, Nigeria: Omoleye Publishing Company, 1982), 3.

tardiness and unpunctuality in starting lodge meetings, and how this inconveniences prompt members.[78] In an article from the *New Zealand Freemason*, reprinted in the *Masonic Record*, we read:

> There are no two subjects—in connection with the general transaction of Lodge business—that claim the more strict attention of Brethren who aspire to be deemed model rulers of the Fraternity than those of punctuality and courtesy.... [E]very consistent individual will admit that the neglect of the study of punctuality and courtesy on the part of a man will not warrant his laying claim to the appellation of a gentleman, but tend to create a distrust in the minds of those with whom he may be brought in contact as to his qualification for any office of a responsible character.[79]

B. 3. Standards—Craftsmanship and Temperance:

Closely connected with punctuality was the idea of accuracy in work—an idea which made Masons sticklers for proper work standards:

> Accuracy.—There was a young man once in the office of a western railway superintendent. He was occupying a position that four hundred boys in that city would have wished to get. It was honourable, and it "paid well," besides being in the line of promotion. How did he get it? Not by having a rich father, for he was the son of a labourer. The secret was, his beautiful accuracy. He began as an errand boy, and did his work accurately. His leisure time he used in perfecting his writing and arithmetic. After a while he learned to telegraph. At each step his employer commended his accuracy, and he relied on what he did, because he was just right.... And thus it is with every occupation. The accurate boy is the favoured one.[80]

A favorite Masonic symbol of proper work standards was the bee. In an 1875 piece in the *Masonic Record* entitled "The Masonic Labours of a Bee,"[81] written from the perspective of a bee by one "Buzz, 18," bee society is shown to conform to the Masonic ideals of craftsmanship and diligent labor. Thus, these ideals are shown to be inherent in the world of nature, which then becomes a model for the human world.

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[78] See *MRWI*, vol. 13, no. 5 (August 1876): 197.

[79] *MRWI*, vol. 20, no. 8 (November 1883): 310.

[80] From *President Tuttle* (America?), repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 12 (March 1871): 456.

[81] See *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 1 (April 1875): 6-7.

Masons also believed that proper work standards were connected with the restraint of certain appetites, especially drinking. They recognized that excessive alcohol consumption had long been a problem in many countries, and although there was no clear policy in the various laws and constitutions of Freemasonry regarding it, Masons nevertheless attempted to deal with alcoholism in various ways. In an article from America reprinted in the *Masonic Record* in 1870, the author argues for a complete renunciation of alcohol: "Even if wine were beneficial to health, what disciple of Masonry would not cheerfully abandon it, could it be rendered *probable* that his influence would bring the Order into disrepute, or encourage a brother emerging from the thraldom of intoxication to taste again the blighting cup?"[82]

Although some lodges were premised on the principle of total abstinence, such as *The Research Lodge* in Bombay (established 1906),[83] most Masons would have agreed with Col. A.J. Greenlaw, Master of Lodge *Victoria in Burmah*, who, in a lecture on temperance, declared: "Temperance, however, is not abstinence!"[84] Nor was temperance restricted only to the issue of alcohol. Greenlaw used the term to refer to the restraint and moderation of the passions.[85] Likewise, in 1871 Ardaseer Goostajee, Master of Lodge *Harmony* in Karachi, speaking on the subject of temperance, said that Freemasonry not only recommended "the moderate and sanctified use of all gifts and blessings of light, but commands us to restrain our passions. Let any of our brethren, therefore, who may unhappily have been guilty of wilful and continued acts of intemperance and excess, reflect seriously how they are breaking their Masonic obligation."[86]

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82 "Temperance, A Masonic Tenet," in *Mystic* Star; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 10 (January 1870): 380. See also "But one Fault—a Word to Such," in ibid., vol. 5, no. 10 (January 1869): 377.

83 See S.H. Slator, *The Research Lodge, No. 3184, E.C., Bombay: A History of the First Fifty-Two Years, 1906-1958* (Bombay: self-published, 1958), vi.

84 Col. A.J. Greenlaw, "A Lecture on Temperance," in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 4 (July 1868) (pp. 132-36): 134.

85 Ibid.—"Temperance is that due restraint of our passions and affections, which renders the body tame and governable, and frees the mind from the allurements of vice."

86 *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 11 (February 1871): 438.

C. Freemasonry, Science, and Technology:

An important element of modernity is, of course, science. And "Science and Freemasonry are synonymous terms," declared P.N. Wadia, the Past Grand Master Depute of G.L.A.S.F.I., in 1907.[87] The first scientific institution in the modern West was the "Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge" (commonly called the "Royal Society"), founded in 1662. "When Freemasonry came public in 1717, just fifty-five years later, it appeared that the Royal Society was virtually a Masonic subsidiary, with almost every member and every founding member of the Royal Society a Freemason."[88] Its head was Sir Robert Moray, who was also a Mason.[89] Along with geometry,[90] Newtonianism was popular among Freemasons, presenting an image of the universe as a harmonious yet diverse whole: the ideal of the Masonic lodge set in the celestial realm.[91] One of the first two Masons initiated by Lodge *Rising Star* (in 1844) was Ardeshir Cursetji Wadia (1808-77), of the Wadia shipbuilding family. Wadia was the first Indian admitted as a Fellow of the Royal Society. He had a "great Engineering reputation and was at this time Chief Engineer in the Government Dockyard."[92] His family business built the only ships of the line made in India to be used by the British Navy.

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[87] P.N. Wadia, "The Admonitions of Freemasonry," in Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K.R. Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume* (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1907), 74.

[88] John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood: the Secrets of Freemasonry* (New York: M. Evans and Co., 1989), 244.

[89] See Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 3-38. See also, "The First Recorded Initiation in England," by Dudley Wright, *The Builder* (1921) (Torrione Castle Lodge of Research, No. 34); October 13, 1999 <http://www.gvo.it/VdSF/torrione_ldg.moray.html>: "Moray's name, together with that of Christopher Wren, is to be met with on almost every page of the early volumes of the Journal of the Society."

[90] The "G" on much Masonic regalia means "Geometer," and refers to God.

[91] See, for example, Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 56-57.

[92] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 14. See also H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, 353: among other things, Wadia in 1833 constructed a small steamer, the *Indus*, in the Mazagaon Docks and "adjusted all the machinery himself." He was also the first "to introduce gas into Bombay and lit up his house with gas-light on 20th February 1834." It was on his return from a trip in 1839 to England that he was appointed chief engineer of the Steam Factory and Foundry of the Bombay Docks.

Masons and Masons-to-be also supported new technologies even if they were not involved in its production. In 1852, for example, K.R. Cama (initiated 1854), while working in China, offered an honorarium of Rs. 150 to the Board of Education in Bombay for the best essay on "The Advantages of Railways," and had 150 copies of the winning essay published at his own expense.[93] Actually, the Masons had been strongly supporting railroad construction in India since at least 1845. In urging its readers to invest in the Madras, Nellore, and Arcot Railway Company in that year,[94] the *Freemasons' Quarterly Review* stated:

> War has subjected many Eastern kingdoms to the British rule—let peace finish the work; and let us not be content with emulating the Romans in their polity by making roads for the transit of armies—let us give the subjects of India the advantages of railways to carry their produce in any quantity to its destined port, instead of, as now, encountering the tedious difficulty of space and time. In recommending "Railways" to our Anglo-Indian readers, we beg to be clearly understood that we consider them to possess vast powers of conducing to the public welfare, and that, knowing several of the parties connected with this company, we conscientiously look on it as a perfectly safe and honourable one; we can scarcely bring ourselves to term it a speculation, for we believe it to be "based on a superstructure perfect in all its parts;" we speak in Masonic phrase, and with a Masonic purpose, from the conviction that the more civilization is promoted, the greater the probability that pure Masonic influence will prevail, and as many of the parties interested are members of the Craft, the Fraternity, both in India and in England, will doubtless look on this Company with the greater confidence.[95]

Masonry unequivocally encouraged Indians in their acquisition of modern science (albeit with a dash of mystery to make it interesting). For example, in 1881, the Master of

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[93] Bahmanji Behramji Patel, "A Sketch of Important Events in the Life of Mr. Kharshedji Rustamji Cama," in Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K.R. Cama Memorial Volume: Essays on Iranian Subjects*, xv.

[94] See Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 181-82: "The 1840s were a time of railroad fever in the Western world, and most of all in Britain.... And few parts of the world seemed so desperately in need of the new invention as Britain's prized colony.... Several disparate interests coincided to create the Indian railroads. There were the visionaries, the promoters, and the journalists, whose justifications for wanting railroads were often vaguely expressed...." Clearly, in Freemasonry, all three interests came together! Headrick goes on to say that the Court of Directors of the East India Company, under pressure from the railroad engineer Rowland Stephenson, formed the East Indian Railway Co. in March 1845. "At the same time, another group headed by John Chapman formed the Great Indian Peninsula Railway...." Later that year, Masons were promoting the Madras, Nellore, Arcot Railway Company.

[95] *Freemasons' Quarterly Review* (London), second series, December 31, 1845: 397-98.

Rising Star, D.R. Chichgar, delivered a lecture on "certain chemical facts illustrating the several mysteries of the science of Freemasonry."[96] In 1888, at the Masonic Jamshedi Navroz (Zoroastrian new year) festival put on by the Indian lodges, the program included—besides prayers, hymns, a discourse on brotherly love and charity, and native songs[97]—a lecture by Dr. Govindrao Prabhakar, a Hindu Mason, on the "Explanation of the Structure of the Human Eye," which included diagrams and microscopic specimens.[98] To the lodge's many functions, then, may be added that it was also an arena for the dissemination of western science. In 1851, the then president of the Vernacular Society, Dadabhai Naoroji, taught a course on "mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, heat, electricity and magnetism" to hundreds of students in Bombay.[99] This was three years before Naoroji became a Freemason, and no doubt Freemasonry appealed to him precisely because it resonated with his own scientific worldview.

The Masonic press in India was also a vehicle for international scientific knowledge. For example, in a *Masonic Record* issue for 1875, there is a piece lifted from the *Scientific American*, under the caption "Sawing Wood by Electricity," which ends with what is for us now a truism: "It is another proof that the impossibilities of to-day are the scientific facts of to-morrow."[100] Also in 1875 we find an essay in the *Masonic Record*, entitled "Flowers and Insects," which promotes Darwinism:

> if insects have been in some respects modified and adapted with a view to the acquirement of honey and pollen, flowers, on the other hand, owe their scent and colors, nay, their very existence in the present form, to insects. Not only have the

[96] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 213. Despite the description, I doubt this talk promoted alchemy; it probably drew parallels between chemical bonds and the fraternal bonds which Masonry promoted. Also, it should be noted that nineteenth-century science was not as mechano-materialistic as it would become in the twentieth century. Still, sorcery, witchcraft, and alchemy had long been dismissed as superstition.

[97] Note the desire to foster native songs within the lodge. This is a precursor to nationalism, or sub-nationalism, and would argue against the argument that such western-educated Indians were utterly deracinated, as Benedict Anderson suggests in his discussion of Bipin Chandra Pal—see *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 92.

[98] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 251.

[99] Deepak Kumar, *Science and the Raj, 1857-1905* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 62.

[100] *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 12 (March 1875): 464.

> brilliant colors, the smell, and the honey of flowers been gradually developed under the action of natural selection to encourage the visits of insects....[101]

V. MASONRY, CONSTITUTIONALISM, AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

A. Introduction:

The early Indian nationalists conceived of an Indian state (within the Empire, to be sure) run along liberal/Enlightenment lines. Freemasonry would have greatly contributed to this conception among Indian nationalists who were Masons, because it had a full-blown and complex organizational structure, and Masonic government was a training ground for Indians in bureaucratic and constitutional government. Through the use of standardized record-keeping (guides for minute-taking, etc.); by-laws and constitutions; the election of officers through secret ballot; supervision by higher bodies, which also served as courts of appeal; the use of procedural rules of order, Masonry inculcated in its members what we have come to think of as modern government. Freemasonry also trained Indians in democratic, or liberal, forms of government. According to the English Masonic scholar and Anglican clergyman (and honorary member of Lodge *Rising Star*), George Oliver (1782 -1867):

> The constitution of a Lodge... is democratic, because the rulers and governors of the Craft, in the person of the Grand Master, as well as the Master of every private Lodge, are elected annually by universal suffrage; every Brother having a vote in the latter case, and the Masters, Wardens, and Past Masters of very private Lodge forming a legitimate delegation to vote in the election of the Grand Master.[102]

B. Bureaucratic Standardization:

Officially, the ritual of Freemasonry has not been reduced to writing in the Grand Lodge of England:

> As Grand Lodge refused to allow the new ritual to be printed or circulated in manuscript, arranging instead for it to be demonstrated and passed on

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[101] Sir John Lubbock, "Flowers and Insects," in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 3 (June 1875): 100.

[102] George Oliver, *The Book of the Lodge* (Northamptonshire, England: Aquarian Press, 1986; orig. 1864), 143.

> by word of mouth, the aim of producing a standard working to be carried out in every lodge was never in fact achieved. The methods of promulgation of the new system together with a refusal to give up idiosyncratic local differences has led to a wide variety of workings being practised in English lodges. The basic framework of the ceremonies is the same but there are differences of wording and of the manner of carrying out the ceremonies and in some workings there are additional or extended charges and lectures.[103]

At first glance, this stress on the orality of the ritual and the lack of its standardization appears pre-modern, and seems to reflect a mode of authority that is "traditional" and not "legal-rational," to use Weber's terms. Yet, in the non-ritual aspects of lodge administration in India, Masons were urged to conform to a standardized system of record-keeping. Enclosed in the Minute-Books for Lodge *Barton*, in Lonavla, I found part of a circular, dated November 5, 1908, sent out by Arthur Wise, the Grand Secretary of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, to all daughter lodges giving a set of mock minutes to serve as a template for all lodge secretaries to follow:

> Mr. A.B. was then admitted and initiated into the mysteries and privileges of Antient Freemasonry after which Bro. A. B. was passed out.
> Ballot was taken for Bro. C.D. age, occupation, place of residence, of Lodge ______________ No. ______________ Bombay (or elsewhere) proposed and seconded by Bros. M.N. and L.T. respectively as a joining (or affiliating) Member his declaration and clearance certificate having been duly received. The ballot proved clear and Bro. C.D. was admitted and declared a member of the Lodge.
>
> (N.B.) If an Affiliate say : —
> The affiliation Ob. was then administered to him by the R.W. Master.
> Bro E.F. candidate for the 2nd Degree was then examined to his proficiency in the former and having replied satisfactorily was passed out.
> Lodge was opened in the 2nd Degree and Bro. E.F. was admitted and passed to the Fellow Craft Degree and then allowed to retire.
> Bro. G.H. a candidate for the 3rd Degree was examined as to his proficiency in the former and having answered satisfactorily was passed out.
> Lodge was opened in the 3rd Degree. Bro. G.H. was admitted and raised to the High and Sublime Degree of Master Mason.
> The Book of Constitution and Laws having been tabled the election of the R.W. Master, Treasurer and Tyler for the ensuing year was proceeded with.

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103 "What Freemasonry Is—The Ceremonies," at website of the United Grand Lodge of England; Oct. 14, 1999 <http://www.grand-lodge.org/ceremony.htm>. Nevertheless, the rituals of Freemasonry are readily accessible, often in slightly coded language and skeletal form in Masonic works, or in full, in anti-Masonic publications.

> Bros. M.N. and L.T. were appointed scrutineers [tellers?] and the following was the result:—Bro.________________elected Master, Bro.________________Treasurer
> and Bro.________________________Tyler.

Lodge was closed in the 3rd and 2nd Degrees respectively.
Read communications, etc.
Propositions, etc.
Hearty greetings from visitors.
There being no further business the Lodge was closed in due form at _______p.m.

Confirmed on the 15th ________1908

A.B.
Secretary
C.D.
RW.Master[104]

Although I could not find the very first part of this template in *Barton's* minute books, where it would have instructed the secretary how to record the opening of the meeting, clearly, Masonry from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries was attempting to impose uniformity on all the lodges in the Bombay Presidency when it came to bureaucratic functioning.[105] This would have been invaluable training for Indian Masons and a highly transferable set of skills when and if they chose to become members of other voluntary associations, whether political or reformist. Also, the fact that such minutes were to be reviewed annually by a superior body (in this case, officers of G.L.A.S.F.I.) would have been an incentive for secretaries to conform to such bureaucratic standardization. It is such uniformity that is, of course, essential to running a modern government, and is an important complement to constitutionalism. It is after all the bureaucrats who are responsible for seeing that the provisions of a government are implemented.

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104 Found in Minute-book (September 1, 1904 to August 1, 1916) for Lodge *Barton*, No. 475, S.C., Lonavla.

105 That this was not a first attempt to standardize minute-taking is shown by the numerous minutes from various lodges through India reprinted in the *MRWI* in the 1860s and 70s. This template, though, shows that superior bodies took an active part in instructing secretaries in the process.

C. The Masonic Judiciary:

Masons also had their own well-developed trial procedure. In a piece from Iowa reprinted in the *Masonic Record* (yet more evidence of the global exchange of information occurring in Masonic publications!), we find, for example, that

> An accusation of immoral conduct may be preferred by a profane.... In open lodge, and when a brother commits an offence, he can be called upon then and there to show cause why he should not be judged and instantly punished.
>
> Testimony is to be given in open lodge at the time of trial, or before a committee specially appointed for the purpose, and in either case, the accused and the accuser, if he be a Mason, shall be entitled to be present, and propose such relevant questions as it may desire, the testimony to be reduced to writing and submitted, when taken by a committee, to open lodge.
>
> A Mason is to be examined upon his word of honour, a profane upon his oath.... Lodges for examination of witnesses must be specially called, "at which *no visitor* [i.e., no Mason visiting from another lodge] shall be admitted except as counsel or witness." The accused may select any brother for his counsel.
>
> ... The decision of "guilty" or "not guilty," degree of punishment, &c., is to be taken by ballot.[106]

The punishments in ascending order of harshness are reprimand, suspension, or expulsion from the Order. According to the American Masonic scholar, Albert G. Mackey, who was universally respected among Masons in the Anglo-American world of the 19th century: "Expulsion is the very highest penalty that can be inflicted upon a delinquent Mason. It deprives the party expelled of all the masonic rights and privileges he ever enjoyed.... He is at once completely divested of his masonic character as though he had never been admitted into the institution."[107] In order to avoid having petty piques among members of a lodge degenerate into expelling members over trivial or trumped-up charges, only a Grand Lodge can impose this penalty. Mackey points out that in England (and this would apply to India by extension), a subordinate lodge may "exclude" a

[106] In *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 12 (March 1869): 446 (italics in original).

[107] Albert G. Mackey, *The Principles of Masonic Law: A Treatise on the Constitutional Laws, Usages and Landmarks of Freemasonry* (New York: Jonathan R. Neall, 1859), 316. Mackey states that although the authority for submitting masonic offenses to trial by lodges "is derived from the Old Charges, none of the ancient regulations of the Order have prescribed the details by which these trials are to be governed. The form of trial must, therefore, be obtained from the customs and usages of the craft, and from the regulations which have been adopted by various Grand Lodges." Mackey proceeds to offer a summary of these regulations as practiced in America.—pp. 321-22.

member for wrongdoing, which "does not deprive the party of his general rights as a member of the fraternity."[108]

It should be pointed out that there was no Macauley's Code for Masonic law in Britain or its colonies—a fact which was sometimes lamented:

> Dear Sir and Brother,—In a recent article on Masonic Jurisprudence, I observe you strongly advocate that a code of laws should be sanctioned by the Grand Lodge for the guidance of the whole Craft, of such detail that it might apply to the generality of cases which come before private Lodges for their decision or which are sent up to D. G. Lodges. Such a code binding upon each separate lodge would be of vast utility and its effects would be felt to great advantage in matters beyond the mere working in the Lodge room.
>
> One great source of waste [*sic*—wasted?] labour is that an Indian Lodge is everlastingly changing its members, our old maternal government delighting in transferring its servants from place to place so eternally that no one can be sure he will not be sent from 'Dan even unto Beersheba' at two days' notice, and the result of this in a Masonic point of view, that a subject having been discussed and settled by an overwhelming majority one month, is re-opened the next by a member who has but recently joined, re-discussed and decided upon with a diametrically opposite result.[109]

Thus, different Masonic jurisdictions had, and still have, different laws, but they hold to the same "ancient Landmarks" or "Old Charges," dating from the late medieval or early modern period,[110] and many hold Anderson's *Constitutions* in high regard, much as liberal governments in the Anglo-Saxon world hold the *Magna Carta* in reverence, and are inspired by it even while their several parliaments and courts have their own peculiar legal systems.[111] Thus, Masonic laws needed to be teased out of the spirit and principles laid down in the *Constitutions* and "ancient Landmarks" of the Craft. Works like

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108 Ibid., 318n. I have found this usually applied in India mainly to those who consistently failed to pay their dues.

109 *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 8 (November 1874): 287-88.

110 Lionel Vibert, I.C.S., "Introduction," in *The Constitutions of Freemasons (1723)* (London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 1923), xi.

111 According to George Oliver, writing in 1864: "In the government of the Lodge, let the Book of Consitutions be... [the Master's] sole guide to prevent the most distant approach of innovation."—see George Oliver, *The Book of the Lodge*, 148. At the same time, Oliver states, "the laws which do not affect its mechanism may be modified or changed, with the consent of the Brethren assembled in Grand Lodge, to meet the demands or requisitions of any improvement in the state of the Society; in order that Freemasonry may not remain stationary, while other sciences are making rapid strides towards perfection" (ibid., 142-43).

Mackey's and others are the Masonic analogs of Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England.*

The Masonic community in the Bombay Presidency was anxious not to let crimes committed by its members in the "profane" world appear to be countenanced by the Fraternity. This was the case even when the crime had not yet been proved: "Brother Percy E. Laurent has been excluded [from] Lodge 'Truth' until he can clear himself of the charge of fraud preferred against him by the Bombay Gas Company."[112] However, since the next line of the notice reads, "Laurent has absconded from Bombay," there probably wasn't much question as to his guilt!

At the Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge of A.S.F.I., on July 22, 1876 in Bombay, the Grand Master, Henry Morland, referred to the case of a Parsi member of *St. Andrew's in the East* at Poona—Bro. D.H. Chenoy—a previous Master of the lodge who also had worked at the Poona jail and had been charged and found guilty of "defalcations amounting to Rs. 8,000....[113] The Grand Lodge heard accidentally about the matter, and had to step in to get the lodge to give him a Masonic trial, because *St. Andrew's* "never took any steps in the matter during the whole time Bro. Chenoy was in jail.... It was considered by the Standing Committee of the Grand Lodge that 'St. Andrew's' had to some extent condoned his offence in not taking immediate steps against him." When the lodge did try him, they expelled him from Freemasonry altogether. Given the punishment Chenoy had already received in jail, and also the conduct of the lodge, Morland considered this a harsh sentence and commuted the expulsion to a suspension for two years.[114]

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[112] Minutes of District Grand Lodge of Bombay (E.C.) for March 17, 1869; in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 2 (May 1869): 66.

[113] Minutes of Quarterly Communication of G.L.A.S.F.I., July 22, 1876; in *MRWI*, vol. 13, no. 5 (August 1876): 197. Chenoy had been installed as Master of *St. Andrew's* at the end of 1870. See Minutes of Lodge *St. Andrew's in the East*, No. 343 (S.C.), Poona, for December 27, 1870; in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 11 (February 1871): 436.

[114] Ibid.

In 1882, a Masonic trial occurred in Lodge *Rising Star*. M.C. Langrana, *alias* Munsookh (an erstwhile member of the lodge), had been convicted in the Magistrate's Court by another *Rising Star* member, K.N. Kabraji (the editor of *Rast Goftar*), of defaming Kabraji and his family in the former's newspaper, *Satya Mitra*. In the lodge, H.M. Chichgar laid a charge against Langrana:

> That Brother Muncherji Cowasji Langrana, a former member of this lodge residing in the City of Bombay having, on the 4th day of July 1882, been convicted in due course of law of an offence under the Indian Penal Code, namely of having defamed Brother Kaikhosru N. Kabraji, the Honorary Organist of this Lodge, and his family, I Hormusji Muncherji Chichgar, Immediate Past Master of this lodge, do upon the complaint of the said Brother Kaikhosru N. Kabraji, charge the said Brother Muncherji Cowasji Langrana with the commission of the said offence, the same being conduct unbecoming and unworthy of a Mason, and I claim that the said Brother Muncherji Cowasji Langrana may be tried and punished on the said charge according to the law....[115]

Hormusji cited several authorities to show that a Mason, though not a subscribing member of any lodge at the time of his Masonic trial,

> could still be tried and punished by the lodge within whose geographical jurisdiction he resided, for he being once a Mason, always remained subject to the government of the Order and also [his] masonic duties and obligations[,] save those relating to lodge organisations[*sic*][,] and that the relation being one of a child to its parent, could never be dissolved except by an expulsion[,] which was recognised as a masonic death[,] and that a Mason, whether affiliated or not[,] could even after having undergone the penalty of the laws of his country be still tried by a lodge for the same offence and punished a second time. The authorities quoted were Paton's Jurisprudence,... and Mackay's Jurisprudence,... and the ancient installation charges in the time of King James II, and the regulations of the Order expressly prohibiting a Mason from showing a want of courtesy or kindness to the brethren....[116]

Although Langrana was served a summons to appear for the trial, he failed to show; however he *did* communicate in writing, objecting to the right of the lodge to try him, "and in the same breath defended himself by attempting to justify the libel, which he argued could be done before a masonic tribunal though he could not do it before a Court

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[115] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 222.
[116] Ibid.

of Justice and further blamed the lodge for not taking any notice of certain attacks Brother Kabraji had made in his paper, the *Rast Goftar*, against him some years past."[117] In the end, the lodge found Langrana guilty and reprimanded him.

Masonry now begins to look like something very akin to a state within a state. Other voluntary organizations may have constitutions, but none except the Masons produce elaborate works on jurisprudence dealing with their own constitutions, laws, and trial procedures (with rules of evidence, punishments, etc.), hold trials in Masonic lodge-courts, and sentence the guilty! Quite intriguing is the notion that a Mason, once "made," cannot unmake himself. Only an expulsion from the Order can cause a person, once initiated, to no longer be a Mason. Thus, he is a citizen of the Masonic "nation," or "family," for life, even if he becomes inactive. Only some act equivalent to treason can cause him to be excommunicated from the Fraternity. There even seems to have been a Masonic national anthem—at least in 19th-century India. For example, we read that the funeral ceremony for assassinated Lord Mayo was concluded "by singing the Masonic National Anthem."[118]

If Freemasonry represents effectively a state within a state, then it is a state which jealously guards its privacy from the civil state and its institutions. In 1918, when a Mason recommended in the District Grand Lodge of Bombay that it register itself and one of its charity organizations under the Registration Act of the government, the Grand Secretary of England wrote to the D.G.L., declaring "that it was unmasonic to do so. The Order being a secret society, no step ought to be taken which would give the courts jurisdiction over any of its Lodges. The course suggested was held to be contrary to the ancient landmarks of the Order."[119]

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[117] Ibid., 223.

[118] From the *Madras Athenæum*, in *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 1 (April 1872): 26.

[119] K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay*, 47.

D. Freemasonry and Constitutionalism:

In the Hanoverian period in England, Freemasonry had for the most part come to support the Crown. From that time onwards, English Freemasonry abjured revolution and partisan politics, except when it was against what was deemed to be the arbitrary power of the Catholic hierarchy, as in the case of the Freemason Garibaldi. Then, an ambivalent attitude was adopted which lamented the fact that Freemasons had been compelled to become politicized. French Freemasonry, though, was seen as particularly guilty of politicizing the Craft:

> It is of course well known that the craft comprises within its fold a vast number of adherents in every civilized country and clime, and it is likewise believed they are actuated by the same principles and inspired by the same fraternal sentiments. But as we have had occasion to point out before, the Masonic code is variously interpreted in various places. In France the teachings of freemasonry have been wrapped in the identity with the doctrines of 1789, and the mottoes of a revolutionary horde have been pressed into service of a peaceful association.[120]

By contrast, British and American Freemasonry stressed obedience to established governments. In a piece entitled "Freemasonry and the Laws of the Land," in the *London Freemason*, Masons are urged to be obedient to the laws of their country, even if they believe them to be wrong:

> If, indeed, any law of the land were contrary to the moral law, they might find themselves under a higher obligation, and would be bound by their oaths as Freemasons to maintain the moral law in opposition to any statute law disagreeable to it, for one of their obligations is "strictly to obey the moral law." But no question of this kind has yet arisen in any country. The observance of the moral law is everywhere maintained in the observance of the laws of the land.... In this country, particularly, this is happily and notably the case.
> .... There have, no doubt, been many cases in which Freemasons might deem the statute law wrong, but this is a very different question.[121]

This does not mean that Freemasons are to be passive against such laws; indeed, they are urged to try to change them if they feel aggrieved, but through legal and constitutional

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120 "The Mission of Freemasonry," in *London Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 1 (April 1872): 9.

121 "Freemasonry and the Laws of the Land," in *London Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 11 (February 1870): 409-10.

means: "In such a case, Freemasons are, of course, entitled, like the other subjects or citizens, to avail themselves of the proper means for obtaining a change of the law."[122] This was the "party line" of British Freemasonry, and, as is well known, early Indian nationalists (many of whom were Masons, as we shall see) believed whole-heartedly in using constitutional methods to achieve their ends.

A reliance on constitutionalism and constitutional forms of government is at the basis of modern Freemasonry:

> As soon as the organisation of the Grand Lodge had been satisfactorily completed [in 1717], the four [member] Lodges adopted a code of thirty-nine Regulations, *which like the Magna Carta of the English Barons, was intended, in all times thereafter, to secure the rights and privileges of the Fraternity from any undue assumptions of power on the part of the Grand Lodge.* Having accomplished this preliminary measure, they then, as the legal representatives of the Craft, surrendered, for themselves, and their successors, the inherent right of meeting into the hands of the Grand Lodge; and the eighth Regulation then came into operation, which requires any number of Masons who wish to form a Lodge, to obtain, as a preparatory step, the Grand Master's warrant or authority....[123]

The purpose of Masonic constitutionalism—like the Magna Carta, which set limits on the power of the king—was to circumscribe the powers of the Grand Lodge. Thus, although the daughter lodges surrendered ultimate authority to the Grand Lodge, the above-mentioned thirty-nine regulations and the "ancient Landmarks" of Freemasonry ensured that the rights of all Masons were protected against the possible tyranny of the superior body:

> The first, and the most important deduction that we make from this, is that whatever power and prerogatives a Lodge may now possess are those which have always been inherent in it by the ancient Landmarks of the Order. No new powers have been created in it by the Grand Lodge. The Regulations of 1721 were a concession as well as a reservation on the part of the subordinate Lodges. The Grand Lodge was established by the Fraternity for the purposes of convenience in Government. Whatever powers it possesses were yielded to it freely by the Fraternity, not as representatives of the Lodges, but as the Lodges themselves, in General Assembly convened.... This must be constantly borne in mind, as

[122] Ibid.

[123] From *Paton's Freemasonry and its Jurisprudence*, in *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 3 (June 1873): 86 (my italics).

> necessary for the elucidation of many points of Masonic Law, concerning the rights and powers of subordinate Lodges.

Here we see three points stated forcefully and unequivocally: first, the subordinate lodges have certain inalienable rights derived, not from the Grand Lodge, but from a pre-existing traditional constitution; second, the Grand Lodge derives its powers from a consensus of Masons who met in a general assembly in 1717 and decided to relinquish certain of their lodges' prerogatives for "convenience in Government"; and third, the prior two points "must be constantly borne in mind" in order to protect the rights of the subordinate lodges and individual Masons. This Lockean view of government forms the basis of Masonic constitutional government.[124] It is an early expression of liberal government.

For Max Weber, modern society is characterized by a type of authority called "legal-rational." Laws are seen as abstract—not based on the authority of charismatic leaders or on tradition, but on a system associated with efficiency or "rationality" (recall Bentham's "felicific calculus" and his doctrine of the greatest happiness to the greatest number, which is what inspired the Utilitarians in India).[125] Similarly, Freemasons saw Masonic government as rational and scientific. In a lecture delivered in 1877, Kharshedji R. Cama, contrasted the legal-rational mode of authority (Max Weber's term), for which the lodge is presented as an "ideal-type," with the charismatic mode:

> In Masonry, every Lodge is governed and guided according to, and by, the constitutions and by-laws. At native gatherings elsewhere, however, [a] great deal is dependent upon the personal character of the leaders thereof; in such assemblies, laws and rules are not difficult to be set aside, or even broken through,

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[124] It has long been claimed by Masons that Locke was himself a Mason, based on a letter he allegedly wrote, but in recent years this claim and the authenticity of the letter have been called into doubt.

[125] For Weber's elucidation of this, see *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, pp. 224-229, edited by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946); repr. in Lewis A. Coser and Bernard Rosenberg, eds., *Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings*, 4th ed., pp. 131-35 (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 135: "...in legal authority, submission does not rest upon belief and devotion to charismatically gifted persons, like prophets and heroes, or upon sacred tradition, or upon piety toward a personal lord and master who is defined by an ordered tradition, or upon piety toward the possible incumbents of office fiefs and office prebends who are legitimized in their own right through privilege and conferment. Rather, submission under legal authority is based upon an *impersonal* bond to the generally defined and functional 'duty of office.'" This duty of office is "fixed by *rationally established* norms, by enactments, decrees, and regulations, in such a manner that the legitimacy of the authority becomes the legality of the general rule...."

> if only one could command influence and money. Our Panchayets naturally, ceased to command our respect when the common weal was notoriously forgotten, and personal influence was exerted to exact submission, not to laws and regulations, but, to personal will and caprice and prejudices. Our Lodges, consequently, have, by comparison, appeared to take the character of regular schools of strict discipline, no doubt proving very irksome, at times, to easygoing brethren.[126]

In stressing the difference between the "personal will and caprice and prejudices" of *panchayat* leaders and the mode of governing exercised by a lodge Master, Cama was only reiterating the command given to Masters of daughter lodges in the *Laws and Constitutions* of the Grand Lodge of Scotland (which Cama's *Rising Star* worked under): "although you have been called to the high position of Master of this Lodge, you are not to rule tyrannically, but to behave courteously to the Brethren."[127]

E. Freemasonry and Good Government:

This is not to say that unconstitutional or capricious behavior did not occur in the world of Masonry, but when it did, other Masons could, and *did*, appeal to the Masonic constitutions. For example, in reference to two "irregularities," or deviations, from Masonic law and procedure in 1873, a writer to the *Masonic Record* who signed himself "D—E" complained about the unconstitutional behavior of a District Grand Lodge official:

> I am not surprised neither of the cases are published; why take any notice; but surely on page 275 of October's *Record*, there must be some mistake, or how does the Deputy District Grand Master of Bombay get the power to supersede the Constitutions, page 56, Art. 1. District Grand Masters may have the power to advance a Brother to a higher degree at an interval *of one week*, but by what power does this Deputy District Grand Master allow a Brother to be passed and raised on the same night?[128]

In my reading of the *Masonic Record*, the Masons in India appear to have made reference to the *Constitutions* or by-laws at the slightest provocation, which shows how much

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[126] K.R. Cama, "A Discourse on Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay," 7.

[127] *The Laws and Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1871), 80.

[128] *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 8 (November, 1875): 288.

constitutionalism was part of the conception of good government in the day-to-day culture of Masonry there.

In an interesting article from the *Bengal Masonic Herald* on the procedure for excluding and balloting for members of lodges, the implications of Masonic law for politics are spelled out in a manner supportive of Indian nationalism, and potentially subversive of British rule in India:

> The system of exclusion is of ancient date, and its practice has been upheld by the Church and the State. If a person be a brother or otherwise, and makes himself disagreeable to the members of a lodge, society, or house; by the voice of the majority he can at any time be excluded.... *Vox populi vox Dei....*
>
> In the State, which means Civil Government, the same ruling has been made applicable, and although History need not be cited to support the allegation, yet it will not be denied that kings and princes rule by the voice of the people. *Jure humano*, rather, *Dum se bene gesserit*, and whenever they have acted otherwise, they have been deposed.[129]

In other words, arbitrary rule which offends the people is wrong and the people have a right to overthrow those who exercise it ("*vox populi vox Dei*"). Although British Masonry preached obedience to the state, the strand of Masonry which inspired revolution was always in the Masonic atmosphere, waiting to be applied by Masons who felt aggrieved by their rulers' arbitrary power and policies—Masons like Washington, Paine, and Franklin. In a list of "New Masonic Toasts" from a Masonic journal published out of St. Louis, Missouri, the first two are: "May universal Masonry be the only universal monarchy, and reign triumphant in the hearts of the worthy," and "May the members of administration be all Masons, that they may act on the *square* with the people, and keep the tones within the *compass*."[130] What this demonstrates is that in 19th-century Bombay—the foremost city of the British Empire—the Masonic press both inculcated obedience to the British state and at the same time undermined the legitimacy

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[129] "Observation on Exclusion and Balloting," in *Bengal Masonic Herald*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 2 (May 1873) (pp. 52-55): 52 (italics in original).

[130] "New Masonic Toasts," in the *Freemason*, St. Louis, Missouri; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 10, no. 3 (June 1873): 100 (italics in original).

of the government of the Raj as it then operated, for the Raj did not yet embody the principle of *vox populi vox Dei* where Indians were concerned. Nor did the government of the Raj reflect that of the lodge, as the piece from St. Louis envisions, for a government not responsible to the governed is much less likely to act "on the square" with them. Remarkably, even in Anderson's much-revered *Constitutions* of 1723, the second "charge" of a Freemason ("Of the Civil Magistrate Supreme and Subordinate"), while stating that a Mason is "never to be concern'd in Plots and Conspiracies against the Peace and Welfare of the Nation," goes on to say that

> if a Brother should be a Rebel against the State, he is not to be countenanc'd in his Rebellion, however he may be pitied as an unhappy Man; and, if convicted of no other Crime, though the loyal Brotherhood must and ought to disown his Rebellion, and give no Umbrage or Ground of political Jealousy to the Government for the time being; they cannot expel him from the *Lodge*, and his Relation to it remains indefeasible.[131]

It is fascinating that a crime so great as rebellion against the state was not thought to be punishable with expulsion from the Order, or even from a lodge. In fact, no Masonic punishment whatever can be leveled against a Mason rebel if he has committed no other crime!

F. *Rising Star* versus the Provincial Grand Master:

Another way constitutionalism could be applied was in the protection of the rights of daughter lodges against despotic impositions by a higher body. Indians early on learned to stand up for themselves in such situations, which obviously had implications for Indian-British relations both within and outside the lodge.

In 1876, as a consequence of the formation of Lodge *Islam* and bad feelings which had developed between *Rising Star's* Master and the Grand Master of A.S.F.I., Henry Morland (1837-91), over it, the latter decided to attend a meeting of *Rising Star*.

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[131] *The Constitutions of Freemasons (1723)* (London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 1923), 50. This is a facsimile reproduction of James Anderson's *Constitutions*, which itself was compiled from older sources at the request of the Grand Lodge of England.

> Brother Morland attended at the next meeting at which the proceedings were confirmed, but as an honorary member, and acknowledged the moderation of the view taken by the lodge and that the resolution was a very commendable one but he was much offended by the remarks about there being no guarantee for the future and the absurdity of a sectarian lodge and at the proceedings being published by being transmitted not only to the new lodge but also to the lodges under the sister constitution. Thereupon correspondence passed between the Grand Master and the Worshipful Master [Darasha Reporter] personally in which the Grand Master called upon the Worshipful Master to recall the minutes and to strike off certain portions which he considered disrespectful, and the Worshipful Master declined to do it by reason of which the Grand Master was much put out.[132]

A few weeks later a summons was sent out to announce the next meeting. It mentioned the business items to be dealt with, among which was one that Morland regarded in "very objectionable terms" (which seems to have involved correspondence between Morland and Reporter). So he attended that meeting to see the item discussed. But

> the Worshipful Master considering that it would be indelicate to discuss the matter in the presence of the Grand Master and also as the hour was far advanced did not proceed with it. The Grand Master objected to this and made certain remarks imputing intentional delay, whereupon Brother P. M. Mehta spoke strongly on the right of the lodge to discuss matters of importance after its own method and at its own convenience and claimed for the lodge the right of free discussion and supported the Worshipful Master in his action, stating that the lodge had always been loyal and obedient to the Grand Lodge.[133]

Morland appears to have been acting in a heavy-handed manner, quite possibly infringing on the rights and prerogatives of a subordinate lodge, and Pherozeshah Mehta—the future "Lion of Bombay" invoked those rights in defense of the lodge and its Master.[134] While going up against the individual who occupies the office of Grand Master, Mehta nevertheless asserts the lodge's loyalty to the institution of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India. This constitutional method is exactly what Mehta and others like him were beginning increasingly to use in attacking unfair or arbitrary rule on

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[132] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 202.

[133] Ibid., 202-03.

[134] See *Bye-Laws of Lodge "Rising Star of Western India" No. 342 S.C.* (Bombay: printed at Ahura Press, Fort, 1937?), 11. Article 28 reads: "Whenever the Master deems it advisable to do so he may defer the discussion of any question or proposition at any stage to the next or subsequent meeting." Presumably, this article existed in the by-laws of the lodge in 1876, as well.

the part of British officialdom, even while maintaining that they were loyal to Crown and Empire—in fact, while *invoking* the Crown (Victoria's 1858 Declaration) to support their attacks.

Morland then spoke at length, "justifying his action and narrating all that had passed between him and the Worshipful Master and made certain remarks doubting the loyalty of the lodge...." He was so furious that "after leaving the Fundator's medal[,] which the lodge had presented to him[, he] retired from the meeting with his Officers. The remarks made by him about the lodge were deemed quite unmerited and it was resolved to hold an emergent meeting to consider them."[135]

Such charges and counter-claims of disloyalty and loyalty which typified the increasingly strained relationship of British officialdom and western-educated Indians in the late-19th and early 20th centuries were already being rehearsed in the arena of the lodge in the mid-1870s. In the "profane" world, the British were clearly in charge, and Indian Masons, like other western-educated Indians, knew it, and chafed at it. Naoroji summed things up in 1893 at the Congress gathering, saying "'that our faith in the instinctive love of justice and fair play of the people of the United Kingdom is not misplaced,'" even though he added that "'we are to all intents and purposes under an arbitrary rule.'"[136]

In the lodge, however, the Masonic *Constitutions* applied equally to Britons and Indians, and greatly diminished the ability of the British to exercise dictatorial or arbitrary power, even when they were in a position of power in the District Grand Lodges. The lodge was a place where two seemingly contradictory principles were in a dynamic tension. Obedience to duly constituted authority in the lodge, says one source, "is enjoined and compelled; and then succeeds the lesson of obedience to the moral law, and

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[135] Ibid., 203.

[136] Dadabhai Naoroji, quoted in Annie Besant, *How India Wrought For Freedom: The Story of the National Congress Told From Official Records*, 164.

the laws of the State and the Nation."[137] Yet, upon being made a Mason, "the young man is introduced into true democracy,"[138] and educated in the constitutional rights which all Masons have. Of course, these two principles are not contradictory when the power being used to call a Mason to obedience is not arbitrary power, as was usually the case. But what happened when Indian Masons went into the profane world, where their British "brothers" reverted to being their "masters," as K.R. Cama alluded to in 1877? It is worthwhile noting that a Bengali Mason, Man Mohan Ghosh, who was initiated in 1874, was an early advocate of the separation of the judiciary from the executive in the government of India.[139]

Interestingly, Mehta had been appointed by Morland to serve as Provincial Grand First Steward in the Provincial Grand Lodge in 1873, so their relationship was a familiar one. It was also familiar in the political world: in 1884-85, Mehta would be President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation—a position Morland would succeed to in 1886-87 and 1887-88.[140] In the end, harmony was restored between Morland and *Rising Star*. The following year, Darasha Reporter, now a Past Master, made up with Morland in 1877, who installed a new Master at the beginning of the year, mentioning that the

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[137] "What Benefit?" in *Freemason's Repository*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 13, no. 8 (November 1876): 289.

[138] Ibid.

[139] At the November 25, 1948 meeting of the Constituent Assembly of India, when the subject of whether the State of India "shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the State," Dr. Bakshi Tek Chand, a delegate from East Punjab, gave a short history of the matter as it pertained to India: "Mr. Vice-President, Sir, I rise to lend my whole hearted support to the amendment which has been moved by Dr. Ambedkar today. The question of the separation of executive and judicial functions is not only as old as the Congress itself, but indeed it is much older. It was in the year 1852 when public opinion in Bengal began to express itself in an organised form that the matter was first mooted.... After the Mutiny, the movement gained momentum and in the early seventies, in Bengal, under the leadership of K[r]isto Das Pal and Ram Gopal Ghosh, who were the leaders of public opinion in those days, definite proposals with regard to the separation of judicial and executive functions were put forward. Subsequently, the late *Man Mohan Ghosh* took up this matter and he and Babu Surendranath Bannerji year in and year out raised this question in all public meetings"—Minutes of the Constituent Assembly of India, for Thursday, November 25, 1948 (from *Constituent Assembly of India*, Vol. VII). September 18, 2000 <http://alfa.nic.in/debates/ vol7p13.htm> (my italics).

[140] For Mehta, see Rustom Masani, *Evolution of Local Self-Government in Bombay* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 273. Morland's first term was 1886-87. See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., 1928), 163. D.F. Wadia says 1887-88 was Morland's second term as President (p. 244).

lodge's "loyalty was unswerving."[141] When Morland died in 1891, K.R. Cama said he "'was so popular that he never came into conflict with any of the lodges under him. He took very particular interest in this lodge [i.e., *Rising Star*] and often spoke of it as No. 1 Lodge.'"[142] This, despite the fact that Cama had argued through correspondence and in person over the affair of 1876, and knew well what had happened. There is no doubt, though, that Morland, although sometimes short-tempered, was well-liked by Indians, and he seemed willing to accommodate their demands for parity, for he appointed them in good numbers as officers in the G.L.A.S.F.I.—men such as Mehta, and Cama, whom Morland made Grand Master Depute, the first Indian to occupy this position.[143]

VI. CONCLUSION

If Masonry may be seen as a state within a state or a quasi-state, then it may also be seen as a quasi-nation-state, for what is a nation but a fictive kinship among the members of some group, and what are the Masons if not a ritual kin group—a fraternity? To be sure, belonging to the Masonic nation is not based on being born into the nation, but rather by undergoing a "second birth" through initiation. However, belonging to, say, the American nation is the much the same—once an immigrant takes his citizenship oath he is officially as much a member of the nation as a descendant of the Puritans. So Masonic nationality most closely resembles mainstream American theories of nationality, which means that it is flexible and extremely inclusive.

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[141] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 204.
[142] Ibid., 260.
[143] See A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924*, 156.

CHAPTER 9

"THE LODGE AND *SVARAJ*," PART 2: MASONIC BROTHERHOOD AND MOBILIZING THE INDIAN NATION

> The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire, on equal terms with those members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.
>
> First Article of the Constitution of the Indian National Congress[1]

> Be faithful to your country, and prefer its dignity and honor to any degree of popularity and honor to yourself, consulting its interest rather than your own, and rather than the pleasure and gratification of the people, which is often at variance with their welfare.
>
> "Masonic Faith," in *Western Freemason* (America, 1858)[2]

I. FREEMASONRY AND THE RISE TO NATIONALISM—BRITAIN

Ever since the 16th century, the two main questions in Europe regarding state power have been, first, "whether and how much both the policies and the financing of the government would be subject to the deliberation of some representative body," and second, "how representative of the people this lawgiving body would be. It is against this

[1] Quoted by Surendranath Banerjea in his Presidential Address (Nov. 1, 1918) at the first Moderate Party conference, in *Report of the Proceedings of the First Session of the All-India Conference of the Moderate Party* (held at Bombay, Nov. 1-2, 1918) (Bombay: The Times Press, 1919), 35. This is a somewhat different version of the Indian National Congress' aims and objects as outlined (in part; see below) by the Mason, W.C. Bonnerjee, the first Congress President, in December 1885:

> (a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the different parts of the Empire.
>
> (b) The eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all the lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in... Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

See W.C. Bonnerjee, Presidential address, in *Congress Presidential Addresses, 1885-1916* (Madras, n.d.), 2. Quoted in Christine E. Dobbin, *Basic Documents in the Development of Modern India and Pakistan, 1835-1947* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970), 37-38.

[2] "Masonic Faith," in *Western Freemason* (America, 1858); repr. in *Masonic Record of Western India* (*MRWI*), vol. 9, no. 12 (March 1873): 456.

background that modern bureaucracy arose."[3] Indeed, one way for a state, whether imperial or not, to create a constituency is through the development of a bureaucracy and bureaucrats: "The state best fulfils the need for securing a large number of defenders by constituting a numerous caste of officials, of persons directly dependent upon the state."[4] State employment is secure and largely immune to economic vicissitudes. Yet, there is always a greater demand for state jobs than there are such jobs, which can give rise to resentment on the part of the "intellectual proletariat"[5] unless the state wisely increases the number of positions in the bureaucracy, and thereby transforms "dangerous adversaries into zealous defenders and partisans." Those who don't make it into the system—the losers—become the "sworn enemies of the state."[6]

It was precisely the western-educated government bureaucrats that James Burnes mainly wished to recruit into Freemasonry back in the 1840s (see Chapter 2). He recognized their importance to the Raj and wanted to bind them more closely to the British. Yet, inequality in advancement in the Raj's bureaucracy became a sticking point with such Indians, and they increasingly organized in order to press for equal treatment in the government administration. As we have seen, they got important positions in the Masonic bureaucracy (i.e., at the District or Provincial Grand Lodge level). Thus, the lodge was more effective than the Raj in opening to Indians higher administrative positions. To be sure, there was less at stake for the British in this. However, both Masonic principles and such advancement opportunities (albeit within the lodge) appear to have encouraged a number of Indian Masons in their nationalist struggles. So, too, I believe, did their interactions with British imperial administrators who were Masons themselves. This chapter will explore the part played by Indian Masons in "nationalistic"

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[3] Reinhard Bendix, "Bureaucracy and the Problem of Power," in Robert K. Merton, *et al.*, eds., *Reader in Bureaucracy* (New York: The Free Press, 1952), 117.

[4] Robert Michels, "Assimilation of the Discontented into the State Bureaucracy," in Robert K. Merton, *et al.*, eds., *Reader in Bureaucracy*, 140.

[5] Ibid., 140.

[6] Ibid., 140-41.

organizations—both in Britain and in India—and especially in the Indian National Congress. Freemasons promoted liberal government and civic nationalism in many parts of the world in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It should be no surprise that they did so in India, too. In India, however, the main plank of the liberal agenda for Indians—Masons and non-Masons alike—revolved around creating an equal playing field in the matter of race.

A. The East India Association:

The "Bombay Association" (est. 1852) and the "East India Association" (est. December 1866) aimed ultimately at a better position for Indians in the running of the Indian government. This was not an anti-British stance, but one of seeking parity with the British and a closer connection with the dominant race. In the 1860s "important English political ideas began to permeate the consciousness of the politically aware in India."[7] John Stuart Mill's *Representative Government* (1861)—in which he argued that Indians were "totally unsuited to representative government since they were not politicised, were not united, and could not cope with representative institutions, and would never be able to do so"—was first countered during the 1860s by a group of six Indians in England who were either students studying in England for the professions or the Civil Service, or Parsi cotton traders. The student group

> was inter-regional in character and consisted mainly of Bengali Brahmans such as W.C. Bonnerjee and Mun Mohan Ghose or Bombay Parsis and Muslims like Pherozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji.... Leading this group and acting as its *paterfamilias* was Dadabhai Naoroji whose home served as a regular meeting place for its members.... Dadabhai's influence was profound: a consistent

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[7] James C. Masselos, *Nationalism on the Indian Subcontinent: An Introductory History* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1972), 50.

> champion of Indian interests, he not only cultivated important contacts with men of influence in England but also promoted a number of organizations.[8]

This group of Indians belonged to the "East India Association" and

> argued, on utilitarian grounds, that the utilitarian conclusions regarding India were inaccurate. Dadabhai in a paper, "England's Duties to India", and W.C. Bonnerjee in "Representative and Responsible Government for India" argued that India should have representative government, and that although the British presence in the country should continue, its control should be limited to the Viceroy who would retain an absolute power of veto over decisions taken by *the Indian-dominated councils.* Both men conceded that Indians must work to achieve this objective whose fulfilment lay in the future.[9]

The establishment of the East India Association in London on Dec. 1, 1866 represented a coming of age for the new western-educated elites of Bombay—that is, "Young Bombay." Unlike a similar situation in the 1850s, which saw the founding of the "Bombay Association," interest in problems with the administration and government of India was provoked "not by the possibility of legislation in England but by an evolution in the ideas and attitudes of the educated group under the stimulus of the views and activities of a few expatriate Indians in England."[10] Dobbin believes that in the following decades "such early friendships were to prove invaluable."[11] Perhaps it is here, then, that we should seek the origins of an all-Indian National Congress, for in the East India Association we find many of the founding fathers of the later organization.

Earlier, in 1865, Dadabhai had founded—along with Mohan Tagore, Naoroji Fardunji, W.C. Bonnerjee, and Ananda Mohan Bose[12]—the "(London) Indian Society,"

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[8] James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism: Group Affiliations and the Politics of Public Associations in Nineteenth Century Western India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974), 56. In his earlier book, *Nationalism on the Indian Subcontinent*, Masselos mentions Surendranath Banerjea, but not Man Mohan Ghosh (see pg. 50). He also mentions the presence of Jamshedji N. Tata, the industrialist. I assume that, in writing *Towards Nationalism* two years later, Masselos had more up-to-date information. As for Tata, although he never became a Mason, his son Dorabji J. Tata did, and was a founding member of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* in 1908.

[9] James C. Masselos, *Nationalism on the Indian Subcontinent*, 50-51 (my italics).

[10] James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 56.

[11] Christine E. Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 47.

[12] See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 79, 793. Strangely, Mehra says that Bose established this society in 1872.

which had the "grand aims of promoting the interchange of views between Englishmen and Indians and furthering mutual understanding."[13] According to Anil Seal, this society was combined with the "Indian Army Committee," made up mainly of "returned" British officials from India, to form the East India Association.[14]

Many of the friendships developed in Dadabhai's home between the western-educated elites of Bombay and Bengal were also to be formalized in Masonic bonds of fraternity. Dadabhai, the "*paterfamilias*" had already been initiated into Freemasonry in 1854;[15] Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee, a barrister-at-law and, later, first president of the Indian National Congress, became a member of Lodge *Anchor and Hope* in Calcutta in the 1870s and was its Master in 1878 and 1879;[16] Man Mohan Ghose would be initiated into *Anchor and Hope* in January 1874;[17] Pherozeshah Mehta affiliated with Lodge

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[13] James C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 56. Naoroji would be its president until 1907; see Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 494.

[14] Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 248.

[15] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India, No. 342 S.C.* (Bombay: British India Press, 1912), 96. In June 1855, Naoroji left for England with his friend, fellow-lodge "brother," and future Parsi Orientalist, Kharshedji Rustomji Cama (also initiated in 1854) to start the first Indian firm in London and Liverpool—"Messrs. Cama and Co." See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 493; and, for K.R. Cama, see Bahmanji Behramji Patel, "A Sketch of Important Events in the Life of Mr. Kharshedji Rustamji Cama," in Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K. R. Cama Memorial Volume: Essays on Iranian Subjects Written by Various Scholars in Honour of Mr. Kharshedji Rustamji Cama* (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1900), xv-xxvii; and also the Bombay Masonic journal, *The Indian Mason*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1994): 1-4; courtesy of Mr. Larry Grant.

[16] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India* (New Delhi: Indian Masonic Publications, 1981), ch. 4, 5. Also see minutes of Lodge *Anchor and Hope*, No. 234 (E.C.), for September 11, 1874, where he is listed as the Senior Warden of the lodge; in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 8 (Nov. 1874): 308. Bonnerjee seems to have been initiated in Lodge *Star in the East*, No. 67, E.C., according to some cryptic registry notes found in Walter K. Firminger and Guy D. Robinson, *The Second Lodge of Bengal in the Olden Times, Being a History of the Early Days of Lodge Industry and Perseverance, No. 109 of England* (Mysore: private printing by K.A. Korula at the Wesley Press and Publishing House, 1952?), 446. He joined *Industry and Perseverance* in January 1875, probably from *Anchor and Hope*. The low registry number of 67 for *Star in the East* would suggest that this English Constitution lodge was established early on after the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717, and that it was in England. This would mean that Bonnerjee was most likely initiated while still in England.

[17] See minutes of Lodge *Anchor and Hope*, No. 234 (E.C.) for January 9, 1874, regarding "Mona Mohan Ghose, Barrister-at-Law," in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 8 (Nov. 1874): 308. See also Briton Martin, Jr., *New India, 1885: British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 203-04n: born in 1844, Ghosh left Presidency College to go to England in 1862 "as one of the first Indians to stand for the I.C.S. examinations; failed 1864, 1865, owing to changes in regulations; wrote pamphlet 'The Open Competition for the Civil Service of India' (1867), describing disadvantages to Indians. Lincoln's Inn, barrister, 1866; assisted D. Naoroji and W.C. Bonnerjee

Rising Star in 1869 from Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie*, London (see below), and so was already a Mason prior to this;[18] Badruddin Tyabji, soon to be a leading lawyer of Bombay,[19] was to become a member of Lodge *Islam* (he was its Master in 1882-83), as would his son, grandson, and brothers.[20] Naoroji Fardunji had been initiated in *Rising Star* in 1864.[21] Unless the two Bengalis—Bonnerjee and Ghose—were initiated in England in the 1860s, they would not have been able to have been made Masons in Bengal prior to mid-1872, due to the unwillingness of the D.G.L. of Bengal to remove its By-Law No. 55, which effectively barred Hindus and Muslims from becoming Masons in that Presidency. Where Badruddin Tyabji was initiated is also unclear. It might be that, like Mehta, they were all initiated in Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie* under the sponsorship of its secretary, Dadabhai Naoroji.

If Dobbin finds the early friendships amongst these men to have been "invaluable" to their future activities, then the role of the Masonic lodge and its lodge system—and the membership of these men in that system—would have been even more invaluable in fostering the development of pan-Indian and regional organizations among western-educated Indians, for, according to Mary Ann Clawson, such movements

> operate at an advantage when they can make use of already existing structures of action instead of having to build them from scratch. The trust and confidence developed through informal acquaintance can facilitate cooperative activity while

in developing East India Association; Advocate, Calcutta High Court, first Indian barrister, 1867; brilliant career, dealt with all major cases; opened campaign on I.C.S. regulations; pressed for separation of Judicial and Executive functions in districts; advocated female education;... worked with N.N. Sen on *Indian Mirror*; close friend of S. Banerjea and member of Indian Association; friend of [A.O.] Hume, for whom he wrote pamphlets; Secretary, Indian Union, 1885." Brother of Lal Mohan Ghosh, President of the Congress in 1903 (p. 203).

[18] See *Membership List for Lodge Rising Star of Western India* (MLRS), entry #252 (Courtesy of Mr. Pervez Mistry), and D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 170. According to the minutes of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 342 (S.C.), for Oct. 20, 1868, however, it is clear that he was already visiting the lodge in 1868; see *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 8 (Nov. 1868): 311.

[19] Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya: *Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 157.

[20] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 52. He, along with his brothers, Amiruddin and Camiruddin, would also come to be recognized as heads of the Suleimani Bohra community on account of their father's vast fortune—an excellent example of the fact that the basis of leadership in Bombay's various communities was based less on traditional status than on new wealth.

[21] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 147.

the more formal structures of ongoing social institutions can provide the resources of leadership and expertise.[22]

B. Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie*, No. 1159 (E.C.), London:

Intriguingly, the "East India Association," which combined English-based Indians with returned British civil servants from India, seems to have had a Masonic *doppelganger* in Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie*, founded in March 1867. This lodge was ostensibly created for returned British civil servants, but it also had Dadabhai Naoroji as secretary—a position he had held in *Rising Star* in 1854:

> A new lodge called "The Marquis of Dalhousie" Lodge, No. 1159 (E.C.), was consecrated on the 20th March. The lodge will, it is said, be almost exclusively confined to those who have served either as military or civil officers in Her Majesty's Indian service, who, when relieved from duty, have sought this as a means of bringing them together in the most important bonds of Freemasonry. Bro. Sir James Fergusson, Bart., *M.P.*, son in law to the late Lord Dalhousie, was installed as the first Master. Amongst the officers we notice several old Indians, viz: Lord W. Hay, *M.P.* (of the Bengal Civil Service) S.W. [i.e., Senior Warden]; Captain Barber, J.W.; Colonel Burlton (P. Pro. Grand Master of Bengal), Treasurer; and Dadabhai Naoroji (a Parsi Merchant), Secretary. The three Presidencies in India were well represented,....[23]

James Fergusson was the Under-Secretary of State for India in 1866-67.[24] 1866 was also the year that Lord Ripon—at that time Deputy Grand Master for England under Lord Zetland—was appointed Secretary of State for India.[25] It was Ripon who, according to

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[22] Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 8.

[23] "Masonic Mems" for Europe, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 2 (May 1867): 42-43. How long this lodge lasted is unclear. In 1910, Lord Ampthill, ex-Governor of Madras, started a similar lodge—*Star of India*, No. 3444 (E.C.)—after his return from India. According to George O.W. Dunn, the District Grand Master of Bombay (E.C.) at the time, the lodge was "to encourage the fraternal spirit of the Craft and to provide a meeting place for the Brethren of Lodges in this country when they are in England on leave or on retirement...." The lodge had sixty members, including the D.G.M.s or Past D.G.M.s of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Punjab, and Ceylon—K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* ([Bombay]: n.p., 1961?), 42.

[24] See Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya, 36: "Sir James Fergusson (1832-1907), sixth baronet of Kilkerran, educated at Rugby, University College, Oxford, served in Crimean War, Conservative member for Ayrshire, 1854, Under Secretary of State for India, 1866-67, Governor of South Australia, 1868-73, Governor of New Zealand, 1873-75."

[25] See "Ripon, George Frederick Samuel Robinson, 1st Marquess of, 2nd Earl Of Ripon, Viscount Goderich of Nocton," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. <http://www.eb.com:180/bol/topic?idxref=486322> [Accessed October 4, 1999].

Naoroji in 1885, "'left the Indians a nation,' with hopes 'of partnership with the English.'"[26] Was there a Masonic connection between this lodge and these Cabinet posts dealing with India? The fact that Naoroji, who had never been part of the British government in India, was tapped by Fergusson to be secretary of a lodge for returning "Indians" (i.e., official Britons who had served in India), is intriguing, especially when we recall that Naoroji was already a controversial figure politically. It is also intriguing when we consider Ripon's future policies about Indian participation in the Raj when he became viceroy, and also when we recall that he was Lord Zetland's deputy in the 1860s—precisely when the Grand Lodge was fighting with District Grand Master Hugh Sandeman in Bengal over Prosonno Coomar Dutt's application to be a Mason and, by extension, the right of "Asiatics" as a whole to enter Freemasonry.

At the inaugural meeting of the Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie*, Brother Norton, a Mason from Madras, expressed the loneliness that could afflict returning Britons from India, saying that after more than a quarter century in India, "when he came home he found himself to be quite an outsider—a stranger to the generation that had sprung up since he had been away—and that induced him to creep back to his friends and relations, or otherwise he must have remained a stranger, but in a Masonic body he had found a home." This sentiment indicates the important social role Freemasonry played among imperial officials.

Col. Burlton, who had been made an honorary member of *Rising Star* in 1846,[27] said that

> he had found among the Masons of India more brotherly love and charity than in almost any other part of the world.... He thanked them for their kindness, but they had amongst them a member of the Rising Star Lodge, a lodge which was established for the encouragement of a union of Parsees and Mahomedans in the Presidency of Bombay, and he had no doubt their brother the Secretary would respond to the toast.[28]

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[26] Naoroji to Ilbert, May 4, 1885; quoted in Briton Martin, Jr., *New India, 1885*, 114.

[27] See MLRS, entry #71.

[28] "Masonic Mems" for Europe, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 2 (May 1867): 42-43.

Dadabhai Naoroji said he had not done anything in Masonry for the last twelve years,[29] and so was surprised to hear that he had been elected Secretary. But as "the W.M. had commanded his obedience, it was his duty to obey, and he had at once accepted the office; but he must trust to the indulgence of the brethren in making allowances for his coming again, as it were, into Masonry." Naoroji then alluded to the relationship between Freemasonry and a key issue in his and the East India Association's gripe with J.S. Mill and his ilk—namely, character:

> he could not refrain from saying that there was exhibited amongst native Masons an amount of zeal that had produced great effects upon the moral character of the Parsees. He did not mean to say that they were immoral men, but Masonry had given them a force and a zest to do good that was most surprising, showing the vitality of an Institution that had existed for more than 5,000 years—because it was founded on truth, justice, and morality.[30]

Naoroji turned next to Freemasonry's unifying power and the implications of this for the natives of India:

> Based as their Institution was upon the commands of God, it must flourish, for it concentrated noble minds into one universal brotherhood, promoting unity amongst all mankind, and while they enjoyed the pleasure of such an association it must confer upon posterity great obligations. At one time there was a prejudice against Parsees and Mahomedans associating together at the same table, but that barrier was now broken through quietly and satisfactorily, and in the Lodge of the Rising Star there was a complete bond of brotherhood between distant races, and he trusted, by the goodness of God and their Institution, that this holy bond would soon be complete....[31]

Here Naoroji exults in the formation of the bond of brotherhood established between Parsis and Muslims (not always an easy relationship in the outside world at that time, or

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[29] What Naoroji meant by "nothing," is unclear. After being initiated in *Rising Star* in 1854, and serving as the lodge Secretary in that year, he left for England in 1855. But he affiliated to *Rising Star* in 1864, even though he seems to have still been in London. This indicates that he was a member of some London lodge, because one affiliates from one lodge to another. He resigned from *Rising Star* in 1871, again, apparently while still in England, and was immediately made an honorary member of the lodge. See MLRS, entry #148. Thus, throughout these twelve years Naoroji was intent on maintaining his Masonic membership, so, by "nothing," he may have meant infrequent lodge attendance and/or not being an officer in any lodge. For dates of Naoroji's residence in England, see Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 493-96.

[30] "Masonic Mems" for Europe, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 2 (May 1867): 42.

[31] Ibid.: 42-43.

even later!), and looks forward to the Masonic bond soon becoming "complete," no doubt by the entry of Hindus into the fraternity. This is an early expression of a vision of a pluralistic nation comprising Indians of all communities, and Naoroji sees it being effected through Freemasonry, which has already been successful in removing—"quietly and satisfactorily," he says—the corporatist barriers between certain groups of Indians. Here, the very man who in later years would come to be seen as the "Grand Old Man" of Indian nationalism, is describing the Masonic lodge as *the* arena in which an incipient Indian nation was being born and lived out. Such a vision of a pluralistic Masonic "nation" surely made it easier for Indian Masons to "imagine" India as a lodge writ large.

But the Indian nation Naoroji envisions was not to be void of Britons. The reference to Freemasonry as a 5,000 year old institution reflects Masonic antiquarian ideas that the movement was not founded in the West, and that in present times it drew its members from both the modern West *and* East. At Lodge *Yarborough* in Brighton in 1868, Dadabhai Naoroji declared:

> The young Parsees, yet mere striplings in Masonry, are already showing the arrogance of contesting that if Masonry was not their own, they were at least fellow Masons from the earliest period. Though I do not pretend to offer any opinion on the result I may say that I think the time is coming when the learned doctors of Masonry of the west and of the east will have a stand-up fight upon some of the now-received theories on the history of Masonry.[32]

A non-western origin for Freemasonry was important to Indians because it put them "on the level," with Europeans when they joined Freemasonry, for it could not be said that they were joining a Western institution. Freemasonry represented neutral ground in their assertion of identity and their demand for parity.

Finally, at the *Marquis of* Dalhousie meeting, Brother Norton decided to discuss imperial matters:

> He was not going to make a political address, but it was a very cheap way for "gentlemen who sat at home at ease" to talk of India as the "brightest jewel in the

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[32] Dadabhai Naoroji, speech at Lodge *Yarborough*, September 19, 1868 in *Bristol Guardian* (date unknown); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 8 (November 1868): 317.

> British crown," but they ought to take care that they handed down that jewel to posterity unflawed and untarnished. He, for one, did not rely on thousands of bayonets, but on obtaining the love and esteem of the people, *which could only be done by cultivating those principles and feelings which were at the root of Masonry*. By extending to them justice—public, private, and social—they would bring about a unity which would tend to the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions.[33]

This view was certainly not at odds with that of the majority of early Indian nationalists, who sought justice for themselves *within* the Empire.

Based upon both its membership and the attitudes taken by its members regarding Indians and Indian affairs, it seems that Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie* was, for all intents and purposes, the Masonic lodge of the East India Association. Nor can one avoid the compellingly intriguing likelihood that this lodge served as the institutional link between the East India Association and the Under-Secretary and Secretary of State for India, thus permitting covert communications to pass between Indian proto-nationalists and the India Office. Moreover, the lodge was not to remain dominated by Britons. Sometime between 1867 and 1874, Naoroji was to become the first Indian Master of *Marquis of Dalhousie*,[34] and in 1874, we find that the Master was another Indian—the Parsi, Dorabji Pestonji Cama.[35]

C. Lodge *Neptune*, No. 22 (E.C.), London:

Another London lodge, *Neptune*, also seems to have had a close association with Indians. Between 1862 and 1868, it initiated eight Indians and had two Indian joining members (all Parsis). At the 1874 initiation of Hirjibhai Hormasji Shroff—a nephew of the Parsi philanthropist, Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney, and an erstwhile member of the Bombay Corporation and Justice of the Peace—a number of important English Masons showed up from the Grand Lodge for the occasion: the Grand Secretary, John

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[33] "Masonic Mems" for Europe, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 2 (May 1867): 42-43 (my italics).

[34] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 272—K.R. Cama in 1893 says Naoroji was first Indian Master of this lodge, which means he must have been Master before 1874, when Dorabji Pestonji Cama was Master (see next).

[35] See minutes of Lodge *Neptune*, No. 22, E.C., London, for Oct. 1, 1874 (emergency meeting); in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 8 (November 1874): 314.

Hervey; the Grand Treasurer, Samuel Tomkins; Leith Tomkins, a Past Grand Deacon; and Percy Leith, a Grand Deacon and "returned Indian."[36] Also attending was Colonel Penn, the Commandant of Aden. According to George Bease's London correspondent,

> This old established Lodge has frequently initiated in London many of the leading Parsees who came home on a visit,[37] and they seem to centre in themselves *all the attraction to our Aryan Brethren.* The Craft indeed will be glad to welcome into its ranks such a well known citizen of Bombay, and we feel sure our Brother will feel proud that henceforth a new channel will be open to him for thought and reflection, and we feel sure many opportunities will permit themselves to him to carry out the principles of the Order, Truth, Honor, and Virtue.[38]

The use of the term "Aryan Brethren" by English Masons to refer to their Indian "brothers" suggests that race was being used as another means by which Britons could feel "attracted" to and united with Indians. The invocation of the Aryan myth meant that British Masons now felt themselves to be brothers to Indians not just ritually, but also by blood. There is a promotion of "sameness," not "otherness," and the use of the Aryan myth here lacks any sense of the decline of the Indian Aryan *vis-à-vis* the European Aryan noted by Metcalf in other contexts during the Raj period.[39] Freemasonry's religious anthropology, which supported the Craft's universalist outlook, may have overridden the anxiety that numerous Britons in India felt regarding the implications of the Aryan myth for parity between Indians and Britons—an anxiety which led many British to reinterpret that myth in a way which reinforced the Self/Other distinction.

Shroff, in responding to being toasted, said that it "has for years been my desire and ambition to become a mason.... I have been deeply impressed by the solemnity of your ceremonial and the admirable manner in which the W.M. [i.e., Worshipful Master]

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[36] Percy Leith had been a member of Lodge *St. George* in Bombay. Besides being that lodge's Secretary and Treasurer in 1869, he was also a Past District Grand Master for Bombay. Since Shroff would not be able to take the second and third degrees in England, due to his imminent departure for Bombay, Leith had recommended that Shroff take a certificate that would enable him to take those degrees in *St. George*.

[37] The writer's reference to England as "home" even when referring to Parsis from Bombay is a glaring example of Anglocentricity!

[38] Letter from "London Correspondent," dated October 8, 1874; in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 8 (November 1874): 313 (my italics).

[39] See Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 81-88, and especially 90.

has admitted me to the fraternity, and assure you the impression of this night will never be effaced." Shroff then goes on to describe the impression England has made upon him:

> If you will pardon me for a few moments that I occupy your time I will tell you one or two other impressions outside of freemasonry which have been forced upon me. I have been three and a half months here. I have seen as far as time permitted the principal parts of England, Scotland, &c., your hills clothed with a verdure new to us Orientals, your magnificent lakes and the charming scenery. When I first arrived London bewildered me. I said to myself 'Can this be an old world or new?' The extent of this vast city, its population, the bustle of its streets, its gigantic commerce, and the wealth displayed in its shops, I say, bewildered me. Again, the enormous number of your grand public buildings, the beauty and extent of your parks and gardens remind me of the wealth of this great English nation. I trust, brethren, you will give me credit that I have looked at all this intellectually and not in a casual manner for the purpose of flattering the country, and that I shall truly convey those ideas to my fellow countrymen on my return to my native land.... In conclusion, I can only reiterate that the urbanity and hospitality I have experienced have increased the admiration I previously felt for Great Britain and the British people (always excluding the roughs), and I thank you again most sincerely for receiving me among you,....[40]

If we are to trust that Shroff is not flattering his listeners, as he says, he affords us a glimpse of the impression late 19th-century England made on western-educated Indians. For Indian Masons, London's "advanced" character would have had added meaning, for the capital of the British empire would be connected in their minds with a Masonic vision of what Indian cities might become. Moreover, Shroff's impressions of England would not be spread only by him, but were now being conveyed to Indian Masons through the Masonic press in articles like this one.

After Shroff spoke, Dorabji Pestonji Cama (see above) told of his "great satisfaction" in assisting at the initiation of his fellow-countryman, "who was also his co-religionist, an old schoolfellow, and now brother in masonry,...."[41] This suggests that Masonry served as a way to ritualize and continue school ties among western-educated Indians after graduation. It is worth remembering that the ubiquitous Dadabhai Naoroji

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[40] In minutes of Lodge *Neptune*, No. 22, E.C., London, for Oct. 1, 1874 (emergency meeting); in *MRWI*, vol. 11, no. 8 (November 1874): 314.
[41] Ibid.: 315.

had also been made the assistant professor of mathematics and physics at the Elphinstone College in 1850, and he became a full professor four years later (being the first Indian to attain such a position)[42]—the same year he became a Freemason. His Bombay protégés and fellow Masons, Pherozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji, were also Elphinstonians. Unfortunately, I have no data indicating how many Bombay Masons were Elphinstonians, but it is intriguing to think that many aspects of the ideology learned at that school might have been ritualized and reinforced through Masonic ties after graduation.

D. Naoroji at Lodge *Yarborough*:

While in England in 1868, Richard Bolton Barton, Provincial Grand Master of Western India, "and late Acting Chief Magistrate of Bombay," was presented with a "magnificent ornament" by Dadabhai Naoroji, at Lodge *Yarborough* in Brighton, on behalf of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, and with an accompanying silver waiter from four other Bombay Presidency lodges.[43] The event was deemed worthy enough to be recorded in the *Bristol Guardian*. Naoroji delivered a speech on the occasion in which he recounted the efforts of James Burnes to establish Lodge *Rising Star*, and discussed many of the issues dividing Indian from Briton, and Indian from Indian, and the role of Freemasonry in diminishing the barriers between these groups:

> At the time of its [i.e., Lodge *Rising Star's*] institution in 1843 there were supposed to be many difficulties in the way: difficulties of race, difficulties of social wars, of political inequality, of differences in enlightenment, and perhaps many others. But there were some stout hearts, who—headed by James Burnes—maintained and desired to prove that Masonry belonged to no creed or colour, to no climate or race; it was the universal patrimony of mankind,—it was *the* "one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin;" and Lodge Rising Star thus came into existence. In the number of March, 1844, of the *Masonic Quarterly Review*, the report of the foundation of this Lodge begins thus:—"The spell is broken, the Mason sleepers are disentranced,—energy again prevails." If that

[42] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 493.

[43] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 165-66. The other lodges were the Provincial Grand Lodge of India (S.C.); *St. Andrews in the East*, Poona; *Perseverance*, Bombay; *Hope*, Karachi; and *St. Paul*, Mhow.

> reporter were present here, I would be a little impudent and venture to tell him that I doubted whether he realised to himself the full import of the words he has truthfully and significantly used. It is not the spell of the lethargy of the day. The foundation of the lodge has broken the spell of ages.... The Parsees and Mahomedans especially of the Persian race take to Masonry like young ducks take to water. The moment they enter the holy precincts they find themselves in their own element.[44]

That such sentiments were reciprocated by Indian administrators like Barton is clear from his response to Naoroji's speech, which he used as an opportunity both to show his fellow English Masons that Indians as a whole could be placed on a level with Britain, and to complain about Parliament's neglect of Indian affairs:

> His reception here to-night [Wadia's source reads: "The reception of *my esteemed Brother and friend Dadabhoy Nowroji* here to-night"—my italics] as the representative of Lodge Rising Star, will, I have no doubt, be most gratifying to the members of that Lodge, and I sincerely hope that what has taken place to-night, and the admirable manner in which he addressed you, will make not a few think that after all, great as England is, there are other countries beyond its own pale cliffs, and people, who only require kindness, consideration and justice, to place them *on a level* with the most favoured nations of the earth. I hope that a time will come when the members of the Commons House of Parliament will cease to look upon the name of India (when mentioned in the House) as a nuisance, and treat it as a dinner bell, and leave the affairs of that great nation to be settled by a few true hearts, who understand her, and therefore know her worth.[45]

Naoroji then referred to Freemasonry's role in improving interracial relations, and, by implication, in advancing the cause of western-educated Indians:

> Br. Dadabhai Nowrojee responded to the toast,... and then, with reference to the remarks of Br. Barton, as to the advancement of good feeling between Englishmen and [other?] nations, and the duty of Englishmen *to take due care of the "bright*

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[44] Dadabhai Naoroji, speech at Lodge *Yarborough*, September 19, 1868 in *Bristol Guardian* (date unknown); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 8 (November 1868): 317. Naoroji could only have mentioned Parsis and Muslims at this time, because until 1872 Hindus were still being kept out of the Craft in Bengal and Bombay (although not in the Madras Presidency). Also cited in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 166-7. Wadia states (pg. 165) that the newspaper recording the event was the *Brighton Gazette*, for September 24, 1868. I do not see how the contemporaneous *Masonic Record* could have been so mistaken. Perhaps two newspapers covered the event?

[45] R.B. Barton, speech at Lodge *Yarborough*, September 19, 1868, in *Bristol Guardian*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 8 (November 1868): 319 (my italics). Also in D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star*, 168.

> *jewel,"* he remarked, that *Masonry was helping that great work in a remarkable degree,* that the seed sown a quarter of a century ago by the foundation of the Lodge Rising Star was bearing fruit; *that the good feeling between Englishmen and natives, especially those who were within the Masonic circle, was increasing every day.* He instanced in proof that on the founding of Lodge Marquis of Dalhousie, last year, under the Mastership of W. Bro. Sir James Fergusson, though he, Br. Nowrojee, had not any claim to distinction, he was surprised to find himself invested with the silver pens, and to have the satisfactory proof *that the Masons of the West were heartily desirous to hold out the hand of good fellowship, and do every honor to their brethren of the East.*[46]

That experiences of "good feeling" with his British "brothers" gave Naoroji a vision of the possible in the outer world of the Raj seems clear. In his presidential address at the 1893 Indian National Congress, Naoroji concluded with almost the same words he had used in Lodge *Yarborough* twenty-five years earlier: "'The day, I hope, is not distant when the world will see the noblest spectacle of a great Nation like the British *holding out the hand of true fellow-citizenship* and of justice to the vast mass of humanity of this great and ancient land of India with benefits and blessings to the human race.'"[47]

When Barton visited Lodge *Rising Star* in 1869, upon returning to India, he told the members that

> he was eminently satisfied at the way in which the lodge was worked and that he had seen many lodges in England, Ireland and other places, but that he had never witnessed greater caution, strictness and truly masonic spirit anywhere else than in the lodge, and at another meeting he informed the brethren that Brother Dadabhai Nowroji had astounded the European brethren of Lodge Yarborough by his neat and elegant speech....[48]

At the time that Dadabhai Naoroji was speaking of brotherhood and racial harmony in Lodge *Yarborough*, he and his associates were seeking parity with the British in the Indian Civil Service—the "steel frame" of the Raj and the key institution in governing India. Thus we read in the *Masonic Record*:

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[46] Dadabhai Naoroji, speech at Lodge *Yarborough*, September 19, 1868, in *Bristol Guardian*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 8 (Nov. 1868): 319 (my italics).

[47] Dadabhai Naoroji, quoted in Annie Besant, *How India Wrought For Freedom: The Story of the National Congress Told From Official Records* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1915), 165 (my italics).

[48] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 174.

> A deputation from the East India Association waited on the Secretary of State for India on the 21st August [1867] for the purpose of presenting a petition praying that appointments for the Civil Service should be assigned for competition in India, and that scholarships should be given to enable natives to come to finish their education in England.[49]

And six months later: "The Bombay Association has forwarded a memorial to the Secretary of State for India, praying him to afford facilities for the free admission of the natives of India into the Covenanted, Civil and Medical Services of India."[50]

Nor were his fellow Indian Masons remiss in honoring Naoroji for his services to the western-educated Indians in the struggle for parity with the British. In 1869, "Brother Dadabhai Nowroji was at this time in India for a few months again and at the very first meeting [i.e., of Lodge *Rising Star*] of the year which he attended he was formally introduced and then received with masonic honours for distinguishing himself as a benefactor of the people of India in a far distant country and for his valuable exertions in all that was truly great."[51]

II. FREEMASONRY AND THE RISE TO NATIONALISM—INDIA

It is important to examine, of course, nationalist politics in India itself, and to see how Masons were involved in pushing the principle of "merit and worth" in the government of the Raj through organizations in India, and in promoting intercommunal harmony. Just as important, as mentioned above, would have been the role of the Masonic lodge system in India in facilitating nationalistic activity among Indians.

A. Bombay Presidency Association:

The "East India Association" in England has already been examined in relation to improved Indo-British relations in the metropole and the struggle of its Indian members to bring the principle of parity and fairness to the Civil Service examinations. Dadabhai

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[49] "General Intelligence" for September 1867, in *MRWI*, vol. 4, no. 7 (October 1867): 263.

[50] *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 1 (April 1868): 22. This is probably a reference to the East India Association which, in 1866, succeeded the Bombay Association (est. 1852).

[51] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 174.

Naoroji's role was pivotal, and he appears to have attracted an active core of Indians into the ritual fraternity of Freemasonry. This paralleled their attempts to implement a vision of society that was clearly Masonic when they returned to India, through their membership in political organizations there. This was especially true of the "Bombay Presidency Association," established in February 1885, which also functioned as the Bombay City branch of the Indian National Congress.

In late 1884 or at the beginning of 1885, Naoroji arrived back in India. At this time he attended some lodge meetings of *Rising Star* when time permitted. At a meeting of the lodge on November 7, 1885, a resolution was passed congratulating him on his "elevation to a seat on the Legislative Council of the Governor of Bombay."[52] Sir James Fergusson was the Governor of Bombay from 1880 to 1885, and while it would be intriguing to think that Fergusson, his old Master from Lodge *Marquis of Dalhousie* in London,[53] had appointed Naoroji to the L.C., such was not the case, for Naoroji arrived back in India almost simultaneously with Fergusson's departure. Rather, it was Lord Reay (r. March 1885-1890)[54] who appointed Naoroji, and while I have no evidence that he was a Mason, Reay's military Commander-in-Chief for a few years, the Duke of Connaught, held the important office of District Grand Master for the D.G.L. of Bombay (E.C.). Both Fergusson and Reay were sympathetic to the western-educated Indians, and they "did much to improve elite-administration relations."[55]

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52 Ibid., 236.

53 Fergusson does not seem to have played much of a role in the Bombay Masonic community, although when his wife died of cholera in 1882 the Grand Lodge of A.S.F.I. passed a vote of sympathy to Fergusson, "the Governor of Bombay and the Past Prov. Grand Master for Ayrshire"—A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 138. Also, by 1885 Naoroji and Fergusson had already parted ways politically (see below).

54 See Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya, 36n: "Donald James Mackay (1839-1921), eleventh Baron Reay, educated at Leyden University, member of the States General, Netherlands, 1871-75, naturalized in England, 1877, elevated to the peerage, 1881."

55 See ibid., 36: "Fergusson, although a conservative, was a more prudent and pragmatic leader than [Richard] Temple and believed in the ultimate reasonbleness of elite [Indian] politicians." Also, *ibid.*, 37: "Lord Reay's known sympathy for the Indian National Congress enhanced his reputation as a governor who understood the needs of the elite. At a time when many Englishmen were having doubts as to the efficacy of an Indian body critical of the Raj, Reay declared his support for the Congress in a letter to the Bombay Muslim leader [and important Bombay Mason], Badruddin Tyabji...."

The B.P.A.'s principle organizers were Naoroji, Mehta, Tyabji, and Kashinath Telang, who was the only non-Mason.[56] In 1885, Naoroji was elected the first vice-president of the B.P.A.,[57] the president being Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, who, although not a Mason himself, had relatives who were.[58] For the years 1885-1909, of the forty-two most active members of the Council of the B.P.A.,[59] at least nineteen members—45 percent—can be confirmed as being Freemasons, and they either became so prior to their period of activity in the B.P.A., or at some time during their period of activity. This latter fact suggests that Masons might have used this organization as a recruiting ground for members. The breakdown between Hindus, Parsis, and Muslims, is worth examining:[60]

Table 9.1

	Active Members	Percentage	Freemasons	Ratio of Masons by Group to Total Masons
Hindu:	23	55%	9	47%
Parsi:	14	33%	7	37%
Muslim:	4	10%	3	16%
European:	1	2%	--	--
TOTAL:	42	100%	19	100%

The break-down by community of Freemasons in the B.P.A. roughly parallels the overall numerical strength of Hindus over Parsis, and Parsis over Muslims in that organization, despite the fact that Parsis outstripped the other two communities in Masonic

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56 Briton Martin, Jr., *New India, 1885*, 48. Pherozeshah Mehta, Kashinath Telang, and Tyabji "were popularly known as 'the triumvirate', and 'the three stars' of Bombay's public life. Tyabji was a founder member of the Indian National Congress.... [H]e took upon himself the task of breaking down Muslim resistance to the Congress.... Among Muslims, he was the first to create a secular political consciousness; on the national plane, he was a pioneer in making secularism the Indian ideal"—Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 738-40. Clearly, such goals would have fit neatly with Tyabji's Masonic ideology, and perhaps were even inspired by it.

57 See Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 494.

58 There are nine Jeejeebhoys in my database of Masons in Bombay from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. Also, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy (Bart. V) would be initiated in Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* in 1923.

59 See Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya, 229-30.

60 This data comes from ibid., 153, and, for the information on Freemasons, from my database of over 3400 names of Masons in the Bombay area from 1843 to 1925.

membership generally. This shows that in the political arena, at least, Freemasonry was not a Parsi monopoly. Rather, it was truly intercommunal and roughly representative of the overall ethnic composition of the B.P.A. itself. Also, when the ratio of Masons to non-Masons is considered by community, we find that 75% of the Muslim members were Masons, 50% of the Parsis, and 39% of the Hindus.

According to Cashman, the B.P.A. "was dominated by one element of the Bombay elites—the professionals"—who were "men of wealth and influence," many of whom "enjoyed lucrative practices in the Bombay High Court."[61] As we have seen, Freemasonry, too, drew heavily from the ranks of the professionals (see Appendix A).

Over time, the "real work of directing the Association fell on the hands of a few," who constituted a small, informal cabinet which met regularly—often daily—in Pherozeshah Mehta's office. The most important members were Mehta himself (active in the B.P.A. 1885-1909), Dinshaw Wacha (active 1885-1909), N.V. Gokhle (active 1892-1909), Chimanlal Setalvad (active 1892-1909), and Daji Abaji Khare (active 1890-1909).[62] Mehta had been initiated as a Freemason in 1868 or earlier, and became a member of Lodge *Aryan* (est. 1878) sometime before 1880;[63] Setalvad was initiated in Lodge *Aryan* in 1904;[64] and Khare was initiated into *Aryan* in 1890—the same year that he joined the B.P.A.[65] Whether Mehta recruited these two men into Masonry is unclear. These three "brothers," while serving together in a kitchen cabinet of the B.P.A., would, by 1904, also have been meeting in Lodge *Aryan* every month as "sons of light" bound

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[61] Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya, 153.

[62] Ibid., 163, 229.

[63] See minutes of Lodge *Rising Star of Western India*, No. 342 (S.C.), for Oct. 20, 1868, in *MRWI*, vol. 5, no. 8 (Nov. 1868): 311. *Membership Registry for Lodge Aryan* (MRA) entry #35.

[64] MRA, entry #155. He affiliated to Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* in 1908, and was the lodge's Deputy Master in 1909-10 (see *Membership Registry for Lodge "Imperial Brotherhood,"* entry #30. In the early 1900s Setalvad was Chairman of the Schools Committee of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and was the sole dissenting voice regarding compulsory education in Bombay, urging that "the time *had* come for making primary education compulsory in Bombay"—see Rustom P. Masani, *Evolution of Local Self-Government in Bombay* (London, New York, etc: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1929), 349.

[65] MRA, entry #86. He was elected Master of the lodge 1899-1900. For Khare and Setalvad, see also G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 54-55.

together by the "mystic tie." Their ritual ties and Masonic administrative experience would certainly have made them a more tight-knit and effective *troika* in the kitchen cabinet—all the more so, since, as the last chapter showed, Freemasonry's teachings and constitutional structure would have conformed well to a liberal organization such as the B.P.A. Also, at the fourteen meetings of the Bombay Provincial Conference—the regional branch of the Congress—seven out of the fourteen presidents from 1888 to 1906 were definitely Freemasons or soon-to-be Masons, and most were from Bombay City.[66] The Bombay nationalist, says Cashman, "prided himself on his vision of a secular India which was above caste, creed, or region."[67] Given that so many of these nationalists were Freemasons it is not hard to see why.

B. The "Appeal" to Britain—1885:

One of the first activities the B.P.A. embarked on, in concert with other regional organizations, was the sending of a delegation to England during the Parliamentary campaign of 1885. Dadabhai Naoroji, though still in India, had already prepared a list of English politicians whom he labeled "friendly" or "unfriendly" to Indian interests. He now deemed his old Master in Lodge *Dalhousie*, Fergusson—who was running for a Parliamentary seat from Manchester as a Tory—an "unfriend" of India, and Fergusson's opponent, John Slagg, the incumbent radical Liberal M.P., a "friend."[68]

The Indian delegation consisted of N.G. Chandavarkar (a Mason), Man Mohan Ghosh (a Mason), and S. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Masonic status unknown). Their task was to present Indian grievances to the British electorate in the 1885 elections and to influence the English parties to devote greater attention to Indian affairs. Instead, they soon sided completely and publicly with the radical Liberals and opposed the Tories.[69]

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[66] The confirmed Masons were: Kazi Shahabudin (1890); Pherozeshah Mehta (1892); Rahimtoola M. Sayani (1893); Narayan Chandavarkar (1896); Chimanlal Setalvad (1902); Daji Abaji Khare (1903); and Balchandra Bhatwadekar (1906). See Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya, 161n. for the full list of BPC presidents in those years.

[67] Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya, 168.

[68] Briton Martin, Jr., *New India, 1885*, 262-63.

[69] See ibid., 197-274, regarding the "Appeal" to the British voter.

N.G. Chandavarkar, "attacked Fergusson personally for being hostile to Indian interests and challenged the veracity of the ex-Governor's statements on the low incidence of Indian taxation and the high percentage of Indians serving in the Indian Civil Service. He even accused Fergusson of intentionally confusing the Manchester voter about Indian affairs...."[70] This shows that Masonic connections could not be directly tied to party politics in England. In fact, had the Indian appeal to the British voter not become allied with the radical Liberals, but instead remained party-neutral (in true Masonic fashion), Tory sympathizers who sought to win seats in Parliament might not have become opponents to the reformist demands of "Young India."[71]

C. The Indian National Congress:

Among the founders and early supporters of the Indian National Congress were Masons like Naoroji, P.M. Mehta, W.C. Bonnerjee, Rash Behari Ghosh, Badruddin Tyabji, and others. Since my research focused on Freemasonry in Bombay, and since the Congress was a pan-Indian organization, it is impossible to say at this point how many other Masons were members of the early Congress Party (I have been fortunate to chance upon a few names from Bengal, however). Even with this limited information, an examination of the Masonic Presidents of the Indian National Congress from its inception in 1885 to the Surat "split" between Moderates and Extremists in 1907, is impressive (see Table 9.2 below): at least ten of the twenty-three (or forty-three percent) were Freemasons. In addition, one President—Lal Mohan Ghosh—was the brother of the Mason, Man Mohan Ghosh (see above), and thus may have been a Mason himself (which would have made forty-eight percent of the I.N.C. Presidents Masons). Of the Congress

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[70] Ibid., 263.

[71] See ibid., 263-64: Lord Harris, then Under-Secretary of State for India and later Governor of Bombay (1890-95), wrote in November 1885 to Lord Dufferin that the electioneering campaign "'has been recently enlivened by the presence on Liberal platforms *only* of some young Native gentlemen who profess to represent India and its peoples.... At a meeting of the East India Association, [I] took the liberty of telling them I thought they couldn't make a greater mistake than to attempt to establish an idea that the welfare of India rested on the presence in power of *one* of the two political parties, the Liberal.' But this warning had little effect." One wonders if this experience soured Lord Harris on the western-educated Indians for good, as he was not sympathetic to them when he became Governor of Bombay.

Presidents from the Bombay Presidency, seven out of nine—a staggering seventy-eight percent—were Freemasons.[72]

Table 9.2

YEAR	NAME	MASONIC AFFILIATION
1885	W.C. Bonnerjee	**Mason** (Bengal)
1886	Dadabhai Naoroji	**Mason** (Bombay)
1887	Badruddin Tyabji	**Mason** (Bombay)
1888	George Yule	Unknown
1889	William Wedderburn	Unknown
1890	Pherozeshah Mehta	**Mason** (Bombay)
1891	P. Ananda Charlu	Unknown
1892	W.C. Bonnerjee	**Mason** (Bengal)
1893	Dadabhai Naoroji	**Mason** (Bombay)
1894	Alfred Webb, M.P.	Unknown
1895	Surendranath Banerjea	Unknown
1896	Rahimtulla Muhammad Sayani	**Mason** (Bombay)
1897	Sir C. Sankaran Nair	Unknown
1898	Ananda Mohan Bose	Unknown
1899	Ramesh Chandra Dutt	Unknown
1900	Narayen Ganesh Chandavarkar	**Mason** (Bombay)
1901	Dinshaw Edulji Wacha	Doubtful (Bombay)
1902	Surendranath Banerjea	Unknown
1903	Lal Mohan Ghosh	Unknown (brother of M.M. Ghosh)
1904	Sir Henry Cotton	Unknown
1905	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	Doubtful (Bombay)
1906	Dadabhai Naoroji	**Mason** (Bombay)
1907	Rash Behari Ghosh	**Mason** (Bengal)

The first Congress was notable for the "orderly and efficient" manner in which it was conducted. "What might have turned into a wild sophomoric rally, was, on the contrary, a distinctly professional affair, which would have been the envy of any comparable political meeting held in England or the United States at that time. For this, much credit must go to Hume,... and to the first President, W.C. Bonnerjee."[73] Bonnerjee

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[72] For Rahimtulla Sayani, see MLRS, entry #280. For Rash Behari Ghosh, see G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 6. The sources for the Masonic membership of other Masonic presidents of the Congress have been referred to previously in other chapters.

[73] Briton Martin, Jr., *New India, 1885*, 305.

was already cutting his teeth on parliamentary procedure a decade before, in lodge. For example, at the District Grand Lodge of Bengal's quarterly communication in March 1875, one member placed a motion on the agenda which he then chose to amend after hearing the consultation on it. However, another member "'was of opinion that Wor. Bro. Beer could not alter the motion from the form in which he had placed it upon the Agenda paper. Wor. Bro. Bonnerjee, D.G. Reg. [i.e., District Grand Registrar], and Wor. Bro. Thomas Jones, Past D.G. Reg., were of the same opinion.'"[74] This kind of experience—which Bonnerjee, as a lawyer, would not have gotten in a courtroom—was invaluable in that it could easily be transferred to other institutions (such as the Congress), for these require the knowledge and practice of either Robert's *Rules of Order* or other similar procedural rules in order to manage parliamentary consultation properly.

One area where the Congress faced difficulties early on was over the issue of Indian Muslims. Did the Congress represent the interest of all Indians, including Muslims, or did it represent mainly Hindu interests, as some claimed? In the early years of the Congress, the Muslim most involved in defending the Congress from attacks by other Muslim leaders—especially from Sayyid Ahmad Khan—was the Suleimani Bohra, Badruddin Tyabji, from Bombay.[75] "Among Muslims, he was the first to create a secular political consciousness...."[76] As mentioned earlier, Tyabji, a member of Lodge *Islam* from at least the early 1880s, had very possibly been initiated into Freemasonry in London as a student, when he was involved in the East India Association. Writing to Amir Ali, a cohort of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, in 1887 Tyabji expressed the belief that there were certain questions which affected all Indians in common, regardless of their religious

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[74] Minutes of the Quarterly Communication of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal for March 20, 1875, in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 2 (May 1875): 67.

[75] "The Tyabji brothers, Badruddin, Amiruddin, and Camiruddin, came to be recognized as heads of the Muslim Suleiman Bohra community by virtue of the extensive business fortune acquired by their father, who established commercial houses in London, China, and Karachi"—Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of Lokamanya*, 157. All three brothers were Freemasons in Lodge *Islam*. Badruddin was the third Congress president. Also Camiruddin was initiated in Lodge *Rising Star*, see MLRS, entry #203.

[76] Parshotam Mehra, *A Dictionary of Modern Indian History, 1707-1947*, 740.

community. For Muslims the "'proper course is to join the Congress and take part in its deliberations from our own peculiar stand-point.'"[77] But in writing to A.O. Hume a year later, he felt freer to express a more complete Masonic vision: "'The prime object of the Congress was to unite the different communities and provinces into one and thus promote harmony.'"[78] This vision no doubt derived from the experience Tyabji had had in Lodge *Islam*, where Muslims, Hindus, and Parsis were all members.[79] Unfortunately for Tyabji, Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his supporters succeeded in convincing many Indian Muslim leaders to avoid the Congress. Around 1885, his supporters had even infiltrated Tyabji's reform movement, the "Anjuman-i-Islam," and got it to declare against the Congress, an act which effectively split the Anjuman.[80]

At the twelfth Congress Party session in 1896, the Khoja Muslim Rahimtulla Sayani—who in 1875 had been initiated in Lodge *Rising Star*[81]—stated in his presidential address:

> It is imagined by some persons that all or almost all the Mussalmans of India are against the Congress movement. That is not true. Indeed, by far the largest part of them do not know what the Congress movement is. Education of any sort or kind is conspicuous by its absence among them and their habitual apathy has kept them from understanding the movement at all. In fact, they are blissfully ignorant.[82]

At the 1913 Congress Party session in Karachi, the assembled members expressed their happiness at the adoption by the Muslim League of the idea of self-government for

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77 Tyabji to Amir Ali, December 3, 1887, in Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 332.

78 Tyabji to Hume, October 27, 1888, in ibid., 337.

79 See G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, 52: "The Lodge [i.e., *Islam*] has admitted Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Jews and various other classes of people during its life of over a hundred years, in a spirit of understanding intended by our Founding Fathers...." Tyabji was Master of the lodge in 1882-83.

80 See Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 335-36.

81 See Membership List for Lodge *Rising Star*, entry no. 280.

82 Rahimtulla Sayani, "Presidential Address," *Report of the Indian National Congress*, 1896, p. 14; quoted in P.C. Ghosh, *The Development of the Indian National Congress, 1892-1909* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960), 143.

India, and Masons such as Jehangir B. Petit,[83] "said that many had thought that Hindus and Muslims would never unite, but that if they did they would be a powerful instrument for good and a force to be reckoned with."[84] Another Mason, D.A. Khare, who was an important member of Pherozeshah Mehta's "kitchen cabinet" of the B.P.A., stated "that Self-Government would be won by the brotherhood of Hindu and Muslim."[85] For Masons involved in the early nationalist movement harmony among Indians of different religious backgrounds was not a mere hope but had already been achieved in the lodges. To the Congress they thus brought a confident vision of the possible—of a pluralistic Indian nation modeled on the lodge.

III. FREEMASONRY, "CLASS" PRINCIPLE, AND SUB-NATIONALISMS

This brings us to the subject of Freemasonry and community identity—or "sub-nationalism." After discussing in detail how Freemasonry wore down parochial differences generally,[86] and how Masons sought to "make all men know it for the great Apostle of Peace, Harmony, and Good Will on earth among men,"[87] it is also clear that Freemasonry also served to strengthen community and ethnic identity to some extent. Freemasons always have had a very human tendency to want to associate with those of their own kind, even within the institution of Freemasonry. This was called the "class principle" by Masons, and although in a European context it referred to professional

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83 Jehangir Bomanji Petit was initiated in Lodge *Eastern Star* (E.C.) in Bombay in 1899, and is listed as being a merchant. See *Membership Registry of Lodge* "Eastern Star" (MRES), entry #165. Petit later affiliated to Lodge *Rising Star* (S.C.) in Bombay. See MLRS, entry #393.

84 Annie Besant, *How India Wrought For Freedom*, 556.

85 Ibid.

86 For 18th-century Europe, see, for example, J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 51: "It is also worth emphasising that Masonic fraternity and equality was emphatically successful in cutting across national boundaries, whatever other limitations confined them.... Freemasons passed easily from country to country, assured of reception and help. This brought American lodges, for example, into contact with European, and, even more strikingly, Moslem freemasons into French lodges. The only formal racial exclusions which modify this picture affected Jews and these were local...."

87 "Masonic Faith," in *Western Freemason* (America, 1858); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 12 (March 1873): 456.

groupings, in India it was more likely to be a polite reference to race-based or religiously-based lodges. From the time that Indian lodges were created in Bombay there had been "European," "Native," and some "Mixed" lodges (the latter had both European and Indian members and were mostly outside Bombay City, although even there Indian lodges might have a few European members and vice-versa). But over time, as more Muslims and Hindus joined the Parsis in Freemasonry, a certain "shaking out" occurred, with members of one community tending to congregate in particular lodges. How was Freemasonry being influenced in this by forces outside the lodges? How might Freemasonry itself have contributed to this process? How did the "class principle" affect Masonic ideals of brotherhood? Finally, was Freemasonry able to integrate both a sub-national and national ideal with its ideal of universal brotherhood?

A. Lodge *Islam*, No. 587 (S.C.):

Until 1876 there were four Indian lodges in Bombay City—*Rising Star* (S.C.), *Rising Sun* (E.C.), *Eastern Star* (E.C.), and *Cyrus* (S.C.)—and they were Parsi-dominated. Not only that, Parsis and others often called them "Parsee Lodges" despite the fact that they had a sprinkling of members from other Indian communities and some Europeans.[88] It is possible that the reference to a Parsi community identity by both Parsis and others[89] became irksome to Hindu and Muslim Masons. In 1876 a few Muslim Masons sought to form a lodge under the Scottish banner called *Islam*. They received encouragement from Henry Morland, the Grand Master of A.S.F.I., who, according to the Parsi D.F. Wadia (writing in 1912), "had for some time then an intention of founding a Mahomedan Lodge."[90] Without consulting the other Indian lodges—which was not

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88 See, for example, K.R. Cama's referrence to them as "Parsee Lodges," in *MRWI*, vol. 13, no. 1 (April 1876): 32.

89 At the District Grand Lodge of Bombay (E.C.) meeting on Dec. 2, 1876, the District Grand Master, James Gibbs, referred to the prospect of one of the "Parsee Lodges" going into abeyance, and hoped this wouldn't happen. See Minutes of District Grand lodge of Bombay, E.C., for Dec. 2, 1876, in *MRWI*, vol. 13, no. 10 (January 1877): 387.

90 D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 200. Why Morland would have such an intention is not explained. Perhaps he was merely swayed by Muslim Masons' desires to have their own

required, although it would have shown a desire to include Indians in the decision-making process—Morland granted a warrant for the new lodge to be formed. According to Thomas Metcalf, the British were convinced "that religious affiliation provided the key to understanding the people of India...."[91] Perhaps Morland was applying what may have seemed to him a natural feature of Indian society to the Masonic lodge system.

In any case, his action excited the Parsi lodges, and at a meeting of *Rising Star* a motion was made to make a representation to Morland. However, when a member of *Rising Star*, Kharshedji R. Cama, who was also the Honorary Grand Master Depute in G.L.A.S.F.I. at the time, pointed out "that the Grand Master had supreme control and that steps should be taken in a regular and temperate manner[,] the idea was abandoned."[92]

> Brother Cama then himself carried on correspondence with the Grand Master and also argued the matter with him at personal interviews and detailed all the circumstances and the purport of the correspondence at an emergent meeting [of *Rising Star*] called for the purpose, at which the following resolution was passed;—"That although this lodge is of opinion that no necessity for opening an additional native lodge in Bombay has been proved and the opinions of the existing native lodges in Bombay were not invited, as was desirable, before granting dispensation for such new lodge, still considering that such dispensation has already been granted and such new lodge has by the name of Islam already commenced work under such dispensation—this lodge deems it conducive to the interests of Freemasonry to welcome and co-operate with such new lodge and trusts that such new lodge would co-operate with this and the other native lodges in Bombay in striving to carry out the grand design of Freemasonry in general and to maintain the character, position and reputation of our Holy Order in the estimation of the native community by enforcing judicious and discriminate management in the lodge and exemplary conduct in the individual members thereof.[93]

One member, however, "thought that the correspondence between the Grand Master and Brother Cama showed that there was nothing like a guarantee that in future full inquiries would be made before granting a dispensation." Another member, "concurring in that

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Muslim identity recognized and formalized within the Craft (in anticipation by thirty years of the 1906 Muslim League delegation led by another Mason, the Agha Khan, to the Viceroy!).

[91] Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Imperial Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 52.

[92] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 201.

[93] Ibid.

view expressed the opinion that the establishment of a sectarian lodge was subversive of the noble principles of Freemasonry and that it was absurd to found a lodge for a particular sect exclusively."[94]

The Parsis were obviously worried about Muslims forming their own lodge—there had been Parsi-Muslim riots in Bombay in 1852 and most recently in 1874.[95] Nor did the new lodge's name, *Islam*, help allay fears that it would be sectarian/communal. While having to accept a *fait accompli*, the Parsi Masons wanted guarantees that Morland, or whoever else was Grand Master in the future, would consult them about the founding of new lodges for Indians—an idea which would have undermined the prerogatives of the Grand Master. It seems that an ethnic or "community" name was alright—for example, the term "Parsee Lodges" was often used, although, to be sure, this was an informal designation: no lodge was ever called Lodge *Parsee*—but a "sectarian" name like *Islam* was not. Thus, no one complained about Lodge *Aryan's* formation in 1877. If it had been called Lodge *Hindu* instead, it is conceivable that the same objections would have been heard.

Despite its name, however, Lodge *Islam*—far from being a "sectarian" or "class-based" lodge—"has admitted Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Jews and various other classes of people during its life... in a spirit of understanding intended by our Founding Fathers which pervades our meetings... (Minor and short lived differences of opinion, excepted)[.]"[96] The lodge banner did have some imagery which was Islamic, but it's membership was eclectic. Of the lodge's Masters from 1876 to 1925, roughly a third were non-Muslims, almost all of whom were Hindus.[97] When a Past Master of the lodge,

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[94] Ibid.

[95] See A.G. Noorani, "In Pursuit of Truth," *Frontline* (publ. By *The Hindu*), vol. 15, no. 18 (Aug. 29-Sept. 11, 1998); Sept. 18, 2000 <http://www.frontlineonline.com/fl1518/15181160.htm>: "Mumbai knew riots even in the last century. It had Parsi-Hindu riots in 1832, inter-Khoja riots in 1850, Parsi-Muslim riots in 1851 and 1874, Shia-Sunni riots in 1872, 1904 and 1908 and Hindu-Muslim riots in 1893."

[96] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 52.

[97] See list of Past Masters in Lodge *Islam's* "Programme of the 112th Regular Installation Meeting" for 1988 (Islam P.R.I.M.). Courtesy of Mr. Mufazzal S. Federal.

Mirza Hussein Khan, died in 1906, a Hindu Past Master, Col. Dr. Kanoba R. Kirtikar, a surgeon with the Indian Medical Service, composed a poem in the former's honor.[98] This suggests truly friendly and fraternal feelings between Hindus and Muslims in Lodge *Islam*. Thus, *Islam* was very much a "mixed" Indian lodge (although the term "mixed" was used exclusively for mixed European and Indian membership in a lodge). It was assumed, it appears, that Indian lodges would have at least some membership from other than the predominant community—but there could be exceptions).

B. Lodge *Zoroaster*, No. 800 (S.C.):

By 1893, when Lodge *Zoroaster* was established,[99] attitudes seemed to have softened considerably towards lodges founded for a "particular sect exclusively," for no eyebrows seem to have been raised over this lodge's formation. Unlike Lodge *Islam*, Lodge *Zoroaster* was a good example of what contemporaries would have called a "class-based" lodge. Of the first twenty-two members, four were Europeans, and the rest Parsis. Aside from the first Master, William L. Harvey, all the other Masters of the Lodge have been Parsis. Moreover, aside from those first four European members, all the members of the lodge, at least down to 1994, have been Parsis. This indicates a self-conscious attempt on the part of the members to preserve the ethnic and religious identity of the lodge. According to the Diamond Jubilee souvenir, produced in 1954, Lodge *Zoroaster* "which was named after our Prophet, Lord Zoroaster, was the FIRST Lodge to be founded in this country after the name of a Prophet,"[100] and the desire of its members in

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[98] See Nasarvanji Dinshaw Mistri, *A Short Historical Sketch of Lodge "Holmesdale-in-the-East" of Mark Master Masons (72 E.C.)* (Bombay: n.p., 1916), 60. Despite what many would now consider Kirtikar's poor poetic skills, he was made Grand Bard of the G.L.A.S.F.I. in 1889.

[99] The lodge was ritually consecrated in February 1894 at a large meeting attended by ninety visiting Masons , in addition to the twenty-two members. See "Lodge *Zoroaster* Centenary, 1894-1994" souvenir (privately issued in Bombay, 1994). Courtesy of Mr. Noshir R. Buhariwala). Also, "Lodge *Zoroaster*, No. 800, S.C. Diamond Jubilee, 1893-1954" souvenir (compiled by Ruttonshaw P. Dalal and privately issued in Bombay, 1954), 3. Courtesy of Mr. Homi F. Colombowala, District Grand Secretary, of D.G.L. of India, Scottish Constitution.

[100] "Lodge *Zoroaster*, No. 800, S.C. Diamond Jubilee, 1893-1954" souvenir, 1.

founding it was to "pay homage/honour" to the Prophet.[101] The capitalization of "first" demonstrates no anxiety or ambivalence in asserting a religious identity.

The Zoroastrian coloration of the lodge was more than nominal. The lodge "has always invited worthy, distinguished and learned students of Freemasonry to lecture at the Meetings of the Lodge on subjects of Freemasonry."[102] Such guests and topics included the turn-of-the-century Freemason, historian, and Parsi priest, Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, who spoke on the "Iranian History of King Solomon's Temple," a title which clearly demonstrates an attempt to tie Iran to the legendary origins of Freemasonry. Also, the Parsi professor, Sir Jehangir C. Coyajee, spoke on the "Iranian Influence on Freemasonry"—an even more obvious attempt to emphasize the Iranian-ness of the lodge's Parsi members, even though Parsis were by now a distinct *Indian* ethnic community, speaking Gujarati, and not Persian or any other Iranian dialect.[103] By the mid-20th century, the lodge had gone on to introduce, as lodge activities, an annual *Jashan* ceremony[104] in memory of deceased members.

The fact that the Achaemenian and Sassanian empires played an important role in the power politics of the Middle East prior to the advent of Islam, implied that Iranian Zoroastrians and Indian Parsis were not always a minuscule minority, but had once constituted a great nation which afterwards fell on hard times. In a general way, this meant that 19th-century Parsis could use the recent discovery of the Achaemenian empire, and the deciphering of Old Persian cuneiform, as well as a better understanding of Avestan (thanks to European Sanskritists) to foster nationalistic (or, more appropriately, sub-nationalistic) pride. Because the Parsis—save for a few—never advocated territorial

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101 "Lodge *Zoroaster* Centenary, 1894-1994" souvenir.

102 "Lodge *Zoroaster*, No. 800, S.C., Diamond Jubilee, 1893-1954" souvenir, 8.

103 In fact Persian in its modern form arose after the ancestors of the Parsis had left Iran for India.

104 *Jashan* is a Zoroastrian ritual of thanksgiving and blessing which involves two or more priests. The lodge would not have incorporated the *jashan* into the actual Masonic ritual, for the members would have been charged with "irregularity" and "innovation." Nevertheless, the *jashan* is an elaborate affair and no doubt keeps most non-Parsis from being interested in joining, which is probably just fine with lodge members.

nationalism, attempts at fostering cultural nationalism were successful, as demonstrated by the fact that they met with no real opposition. This historical construction of Parsis as "not unworthy descendants of the men who at one time gained... an empire from the Hellespont to the Indus,"[105] and who had played an important role in Jewish history, was led by such Freemasons as Dosabhai Framji Karaka in his well-known *History of the Parsis* (1884), and it enabled Parsi Freemasons to position themselves more centrally in the Masonic origin myth surrounding King Solomon's temple (and thus more closely to the Christian British).

C. Lodge *Cyrus*, No. 1359 (E.C.):

This "re-positioning" of the Parsi community *vis-à-vis* both the British and other Indian communities using Freemasonry is apparent as early as 1871, when Lodge *Cyrus* was founded in Bombay under the English Constitution:

> Since the majority of the Brethren, who conceived the idea of forming this new Lodge, were Parsees, they rightly and fittingly named it "Cyrus," after their noble, mighty and high minded monarch, the founder... of [the] Persian Kingdom about the year 550 B.C. History informs us that he was a great King, who extended his conquests in the West upto the shores of the river Danube and to the confines of China in the East. He ruled his peoples wisely, well and was very sympathetic to them. He rescued the Jews, as is well-known to the Brethren, from captivity and the yoke of the Assyrians, facilitated their return to their native and holy city Jerusalem, and materially assisted them in rebuilding the Temple to the service and glory of God, since the first Temple [i.e., Solomon's Temple] was destroyed and razed to the ground by King Nebuchadnezzar.[106]

The banner of Lodge *Cyrus*, showed "King Cyrus seated on his throne liberating the Jewish captives"[107] (see Illustration 2). Here, ancient Iran was linked to Masonry's origins and, through that, to the Bible.

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[105] Dosabhai Framji Karaka, *History of the Parsis: Including Their Manners, Customs, Religion, and Present Position*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1986; orig. 1884), 104-05. See also vol. 2, 242, where Karaka describes the Parsis as descended from a people "who at one time were masters of a vast empire...."

[106] Jehangir Framroz Shroff, "Hundred Glorious Years: Historical Sketch of Lodge Cyrus, No. 1359, E.C.," in "Lodge *Cyrus*, No. 1359 , E.C., Centenary Celebrations, 1871-1971" souvenir (privately issued in Bombay, 1971), 13-14. Courtesy of Mr. Homi F. Colombowala, District Grand Secretary, of D.G.L. of India, Scottish Constitution).

[107] *MRWI*, vol. 9, no. 3 (June 1872): 81.

Yet, contrary to what the name *Cyrus* might suggest, the lodge was not an exclusively Parsi lodge (unlike Lodge *Zoroaster*). In 1872, one year after being founded, four Hindus were initiated in the lodge—the first to be systematically initiated in Bombay (now that the debate over the question of admitting Hindus had been settled in their favor). These men, Shantaram Narayan, Bala Mangesh Wagle, Ghanasham Nilkanth Nadkarni, and Dr. Shantaram Vithal Sanzgiri, would go on to found Lodge *Aryan*, a lodge whose main aim was to initiate Hindus into Freemasonry. In 1892, 1894, 1896, 1905, 1909, and 1919, *Cyrus'* Masters had identifiably Hindu names, and in 1912 and 1915 its Masters were Muslims.[108]

Perhaps the reason why *Cyrus*, although dominated by Parsis, was never an exclusively Parsi lodge is that the story of Cyrus the Great presented to the Parsis the model of a pluralistic state, in contrast to the story of Zoroaster, which reflected a religiously-based corporate identity. In 1926, when the Parsi Padam S. M. Godrej was installed in the "Eastern Chair" (i.e., became Master of the lodge), he thanked the congregation of Masons, declaring, "I glory in the name of Cyrus."[109] Then he said that this expression referred to

> the religious tolerance which Cyrus the Elder or Cyrus the Great who reigned the quarter part of the world extended to his different subjects of varied faith and creed or cast [*sic*] and his advanced ideas of Statesmanship and sympathy towards different religions. His founding one of the mightiest ancient monarchies by conquering the whole of Asia, his founding the institution of the Red Cross Society and last but not least by his releasing thousands of [the] children of Israel from their long captivity of several decades in Babylon made him a world famous monarch.[110]

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108 Jehangir Framroz Shroff, "Hundred Glorious Years," 44-45.

109 Ibid., 24.

110 Ibid., 25. The reference to the Red Cross seems to refer to the degree of the "Red Cross of Babylon," an "allied" Masonic degree. "It is closely associated with the Royal Arch degree and the rebuilding of the Second Temple.... Its outstanding feature is the passing of the bridge, symbolically passing from one state of existence to another—in the world beyond the grave... a further advancement of the Soul away from earth conditions—toward God"—Ray V. Denslow, *Masonic Rites and Degreee* (Trenton, Missouri: self-published, 1955), 134.

Godrej then went on to give "a very impressive extract from the life of Cyrus which was highly appreciated by one and all...." The reference to the Red Cross Society is indeed startling and may be another, albeit strained, attempt to paint Cyrus—and with him, the Parsis generally—in a humanitarian and benevolent light. Here Parsi communal pride was based on an empire created by their ancestors which had as its guiding principle toleration for diversity. Here, then, is a rare example of a "sub-nationalism," or corporatist consciousness, actually *contributing* to the notion of pluralism, and it does so within a Masonic context.

(In a demonstration of the curious connections which the ties of Masonic brotherhood can produce, that same night, Godrej asked Rustom K. R. Cama, the District Grand Senior Warden, who in his public career was an ardent nationalist solicitor, to convey the fraternal greetings of the lodge to Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, District Grand Master *and* Governor of the Bombay Presidency.[111])

Other lodges also promoted Parsi/ancient Persian identity and pride—at least in the iconography of lodge banners. Lodge *Eastern Star*, No. 1189 (E.C.), which had been founded in 1867 by eleven Parsis and two Muslims,[112] had a banner made up in the late 19th century based on a design by a previous District Grand Master, E. Tyrrell Leith,[113] which depicted "a fire altar with fire burning thereon with crowned male figures supporting it on either side with spears in their right hands and swords in their left (see Illustration 3). The design was taken from a coin of Shapur I, the 2nd King of the Sassanido [*sic*] dynasty, who reigned in Persia from A.D. 240 to 271."[114] Lodge *Rising*

[111] Ibid. R.K.R. Cama had also been managing director of the *Bombay Chronicle* from 1915 to 1918. He had an ill-fated marriage to Bhikaji Cama (1861-1936), better known in Indian history as "Madame Cama." See Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of the Movement for Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800-1990* (New Delhi: Kali For Women, 1993), 47. Also, H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, vol. 1 (Bombay: G. Claridge and Co., Ltd., 1939), 158.

[112] Lord Ripon, the then Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, signed the warrant for the lodge. See the short history of *Eastern Star* compiled by N.F. Madon, in "Lodge *Eastern* Star, No. 17, G.L.I." centenary souvenir (Bombay: n.p., 1967?), 15.

[113] Leith made the design in 1879 and it was approved by the lodge in 1880.

[114] See the short history of *Eastern Star* compiled by N.F. Madon, in Centenary Souvenir of Lodge *Eastern Star*, 19.

Star commissioned M.C. Murzban to have a banner made up in 1875 in England which merged Masonic with ancient Persian iconography, such as Mt. Elburz and Zoroastrian symbols, such as the fire altar (see Illustration 4). The apron part of the banner was "rounded off at the lower ends, after the shape of an apron said to have been found among the ruins of Persepolis."[115] This was only a year before the founding of Lodge *Islam*. It is not difficult to imagine that Muslim Masons who were members of *Rising Star* or other Parsi-dominated lodges might have been increasingly feeling as if their own cultural identity was being given short shrift in the growing promotion by Parsi Masons of a pre-Islamic Persian identity (through lodge symbolism and references) with which Muslims could not identify. Perhaps it was for a similar reason that Hindus in Bombay got up Lodge *Aryan* in 1877/78. To be sure, *Aryan* was also established in the wake of the founding of the Arya Samaj in Bombay a couple of years earlier, and there were connections between the two institutions (see Chapter 5). As an aside, the current banner for Lodge *Aryan*, designed sometime in the 1930s (I believe) has the typical Masonic iconography of an all-seeing eye set above a square and compass. But behind the square and compass is a large, clockwise swastika set at a forty-five degree angle—exactly like, and no doubt in imitation of—the common orientation of the Nazi swastika (see Illustration 5)![116] Nevertheless, in the period of my research, Lodge *Aryan* had a number of Parsi members, including Pherozeshah Mehta,[117] and a sprinkling of Muslim members.[118]

D. *Fin de Siècle* "Class" Lodges:

In a 1907 article on "The Class Characteristic of Lodges," W.A. Haig Brown, the British District Grand Senior Warden of the D.G.L. of Bombay (E.C.), argues strongly in

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[115] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge "Rising Star of Western India,"* 196.

[116] The superimposition of the compass and square on the Nazi-style swastika is extremely ironic, given that the Nazis crushed Freemasonry in Germany.

[117] See G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 54-55.

[118] See "Register Numbers of Members of the *Aryan* Lodge," in *The 'Aryan' Lodge, No. 30 G.L.I., Centennial Jubilee Celebrations* souvenir (Bombay: n.p., 1978).

favor of forming lodges around the principle of some common interest or quality among the members, whether national, racial, educational, philosophical, or professional.[119] Haig Brown accepts that Freemasonry is meant to effect a "perfect fusion of discordant talents,"[120] but having accepted the existence of discordant talents, he argues, the next step was for men of the same discordant talents to unite together as a small group.

Masons were ambivalent about such a concept. In reviewing Haig Brown's article, which was in the *K.R. Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume*, the editor, Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, acknowledges that European, Parsi, Hindu, and Muslim lodges already exist in India, but "Bro. Brown's suggestion, if carried further, must lead to the formation of... Lawyers' Lodges, Doctors' Lodges, Engineers' Lodges, and so on.... Well, if carried too far, we would come to the old state of affairs, from which masonry has, to some extent, taken its rise.... We would come back to where we started."[121] Modi recognizes that modern Freemasonry arose out of, and in opposition to, a medieval corporatist society and later sectarian conflicts,[122] and that care has to be taken to ensure that a re-introduction of certain degree of corporatism does not destroy the unity of the Order. This said, Modi—like a number of Masons at the time—seems willing to accommodate the human tendency to want to mingle with one's own kind ("No human Institution is perfect. There might arise some disadvantages from such specialization..., but it will have some advantages of its own.")—especially where religion is concerned:

> What happened in my Lodge [i.e., *Rising Star*] a month ago brought this fact vividly before my mind. The European Lodges, or to speak by their other class-characteristic, the Christian Lodges, have their Sacred Volume before them, not only in name, but for actual use. They open their usual work by reading passages from their Scriptures. A Parsi Lodge [probably *Zoroaster*] has followed their

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[119] See W.A. Haig Brown, "The Class Characteristic of Lodges," in Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K.R. Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume* (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1907), 98-101.

[120] Ibid., 99.

[121] Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K.R. Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume*, xxvi.

[122] See Ernest Beha, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Freemasonry* (London: Arco Publications, 1962), 111: In the period after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, England "was just emerging form a long period of political and religious strife and the Lodges were the only places where men of all persuasions could meet in amity and enjoy each other's company."

> example and has lately commenced opening its business with the recital of a few appropriate passages from the Zend Avesta. When... [K.R. Cama]... rose to propose, the other day, that the example of the Christian Lodges and of the above referred to Parsi Lodge may be followed in our Lodge, there rose up a Mahomedan Brother to say, that "If passages from the Zend Avesta may be read, passages from the Korân may also be read". All honour to that Brother for such a regard for his religion. Now, though the Lodge is, what may be called, a Parsi Lodge, there is a small sprinkling of members of other creeds. So, the question, or rather the objection raised by the Mahomedan Brother may possibly come in the way of the desired innovation. Therefore, in such a case, the introduction of a class-characteristic, which in this case would be what Bro. Brown calls a race class-characteristic, would be decidedly advantageous.[123]

In the early 19th century, the Duke of Sussex, as Grand Master of England, had sought successfully to de-Christianize the ritual of the Craft in England. Of course, a religious holy book ("Volume of the Sacred Law" or "VSL") was supposed to lie open on the lodge altar, and in Christian countries, this was inevitably the Bible. In India, lodges with mixed membership had developed the habit of placing various VSLs at the same time on the altar.[124] But to read from the Bible or any VSL during the lodge meeting appears to be something new in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and potentially disunifying, for it could alienate members who did not accept the divine authority of a particular VSL. Thus, various lodges in turn-of-the-century Bombay were coming dangerously close to betraying the spirit of brotherhood—if they had not done so already. It seems that as long as Masons of the three British Constitutions did not introduce anything into the ritual itself which demanded allegiance to a particular religion, they were free to create customs for themselves, such as reading from a Holy Book (V.S.L.) to open a lodge. However, since discussions of a religious or political nature are not permitted in a lodge—*precisely* to avoid disunity along sectarian or partisan lines—it would seem that the *spirit* of the law was being violated. But since merely reading from a

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[123] Ibid., xxvii.

[124] Failure to do so could lead to complaints, as when P.M. Jeejeebhoy, "brought to the notice of the W.M. [i.e., Worshipful Master] that the Zend Avesta (Parsi Sacred Writings) was not on the pedestal along with the Bible. He stated that in Parsi Lodges it was the practice to have both these volumes open and that this should always be done in Lodge *Hiram* as it had a number of Parsi members"—K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961* (Bombay: n.p., 1961?), 28.

religious text is not quite the same as discussing religion, it might have been argued that the *word* of the law was not being compromised. At least this may be how Cama, Modi, and the members of various "Christian" lodges viewed the matter.

What is remarkable, though, is K.R. Cama's insensitivity to non-Parsis in late 1906, given his attitude thirty years before about the role of the lodge in bringing the different Indian communities together. How did he think non-Parsis in the lodge would react to such a proposal? Also, he had been involved in calming the uproar over the formation of Lodge *Islam* in the 1870s, caused by the Parsi Masons thinking it would be a "sectarian" lodge. So why did he want to introduce sectarian features now? In any case, Cama's proposal did not go through. The majority of the Parsi members of the lodge did not want to drive away their Hindu and Muslim "brothers" by injecting a clearly Zoroastrian content into the life of the lodge—Parsi elements in the banner were one thing; reading the Zend-Avesta quite another. Indeed, out of the handful of new members that *Rising Star* accepted each year from 1890 to 1911 (the last year covered by D.F. Wadia's history of the lodge), there were almost always Hindus or Muslims among them, although new Parsi members predominated (yet in 1890 there were four Muslims as opposed to two Parsis), and in 1896, Fazalbhai Visram, a Muslim, was made Master of the lodge.[125] Even when it came to promoting Parsi cultural elements which had earlier been incorporated into Masonic life in Bombay there seems to have been a reverse. In 1904, when the new Master of *Rising Star*, Maneck R. Sethna, took office the first thing he did was to attempt to revive the Jamshedi Naoroze Masonic Festival, which had been in abeyance for "over four years." He got help from K.R. Cama and Jivanji J. Modi, "but response to the movement was not hearty and the matter was dropped."[126]

[125] See D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 281.
[126] Ibid., 310.

E. Some Reflections on the Subject:

Clearly, something was occurring during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in some of Bombay's lodges that mimicked identity and community politics in the "profane" world. Where once sectarianism and communalism were feared or at least downplayed in the Masonic community of Bombay (the European-Indian divide excepted—but even here there was debate as to its conformity to Masonic ideals; recall the letter from "R.A.M."[127] in Chapter 2), at the turn of the century community-based and even sectarian tendencies were indulged or tolerated by the Craft generally, and, indeed, were seen as desirable by certain Masons and lodges. What are the possible reasons for this?

E. 1. According to Benjamin Barber, modernity "precedes and thus sponsors and conditions its critics. And though those critics, on the way to combatting the modern, may try to rescucitate ancient usages and classical norms, such usages and norms—ethnicity, fundamentalist religion, nationalism, and culture for example—are themselves at least in part inventions of the agitated modern mind."[128] In the last quarter of the 19th century in Western and Central Europe, the liberal ideal of a state, wherein the churches do not determine state policy, was having to confront a rise in thinking about religion, especially Catholicism. Liberal Protestants began to have doubts about liberalism,and many became interested in Catholic piety (even Lord Ripon converted); Freemasons were vehemently denounced by the Vatican for their perceived anti-religious stance; and Bismarck launched the nationalistic *kulturkampf* in Germany, which lasted from 1873 to 1887. The latter arose both from Bismarck's concern that Rome was claiming a loyalty from Catholic Germans which transcended the loyalty he believed they owed to the new German state, and from his worries over the formation of the Roman Catholic Center Party—which was clearly a type of "sub-nationalism." Religious fault lines affecting German Freemasonry appeared, too. The Jews, who had made gains in their entry into

[127] See letter to the editor from "R.A.M.," in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 1 (April, 1869): 35.

[128] Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996; orig. 1995), 157.

the Craft in the 1850s to the 1870s, were being increasingly excluded in the 1880s and 90s. "There can be no doubt that the eighties and nineties marked a retrogression.... The exclusion of Jews became the regular procedure in every area of life, and the Masons were no exception. Even those who had always taken up the cudgels on behalf of Jews now changed their minds."[129] Given what was happening in Europe, it would seem that British Freemasons in India were going down the same road as their Germans "brothers," although they would never be able to go as far in re-Christianizing the lodges (nor did all or even most British Masons want to—for this they had higher-degree bodies, like the Knights Templar, which required a belief in Christ to join and which, coincidentally, gained greatly in popularity in the late 19th century).

Before long, as the above statement by Modi shows, certain Indian (really, Parsi) Masons began imitating this tendency. The membership history of Lodge *Holmesdale in the East*, of Mark Master Masons, No. 72 E.C.[130] allows us to trace this European-born move away from universalism Europeans (at least in India) in the two decades or more leading up to the First World War, when the trend seems to reverse:

> With the lapse of time and spread of English Craft Freemasonry an era dawned about the early seventies by which the Constitution of the Lodge began to assume a cosmopolitan character, which it retained until the year 1898. In that year, however, a new Mark Lodge... was founded in Bombay, the membership of which was confined to Europeans. The foundation of this Lodge affected the European membership of Lodge "Holmesdale," and from time to time European members resigned the latter Lodge, until in the year 1904 no European brother remained on the roll.... From the year 1904 to 1914 the subscribing members... were all Indians. In the beginning of 1915, however, some European brethren joined the Lodge again.[131]

The people of western Europe, it seems, had had their mid-century liberal "moment" and decided that they did not want to be drawn together beyond the level of the

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[129] Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723-1939*; trans. Leonard Oschry (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970), 169.

[130] The Mark Master degree is often called the fourth degree. It is a degree taken by many Master Masons. It does not operate under the same administration (District Grand Lodge, etc.) as regular Craft Masonry.

[131] Nasarvanji Dinshaw Mistri, *A Short History of Lodge "Holmesdale in the East" of Mark Master Masons (No. 72 E.C.) From Its Consecration in 1865 to Its Jubilee in 1915* (Bombay: n.p., 1916), 83.

nation, either culturally or economically in some liberal utopia.[132] The demise of the notion of a "community" of European nations contributed greatly to World War I. Increasingly, emphasis on class differences, as well, threatened to challenge newly-established nationalist identities *within* states, and we see the beginning of what may be called "neo-corporatism."[133] The rise in popularity of neo-corporatism in Western societies in the late 19th century may have influenced the growth of "class" lodges in Britain and India, at the expense of pluralism within lodges.

E. 2. It seems clear that it was mainly Parsis, not Hindus or Muslims, who were most active in promoting community identity in the lodge (at least in some lodges), and this reflects a more general Parsi crisis of identity around the turn of the century. The Parsis had generally done well by the British and many of them were becoming increasingly worried about nationalist politics, which stressed Indianness over other identities. Many Parsis began to see in the nationalist movement the threat of Hindu domination. Aside from a minority of "Congress Parsis," the Parsi community began to stress Parsi corporate identity and supported the British even more. For example, in 1897 the Parsi and member of Lodge *Rising Star*, Kaikhushru N. Kabraji, the editor of the *Rast Goftar* (which another Mason, Dadabhai Naoroji, had founded many years before), began to question Naoroji's loyalty to the British empire in his editorials.[134] Muslims, of course, had similar concerns about being overwhelmed by Hindus, as the British expanded the

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[132] Economically, for example, the Great Depression, which began in the 1870s and lasted two decades, led to the collapse of mid-century free trade agreements—a pillar of economic liberalism.

[133] Neo-corporatism is a political science term that describes a particular relationship between government and certain functional or occupational groups in society, and how government regulates this relationship to create harmony between these groups. Often, a government agency is established which is dedicated to dealing with specific groups in society, or specific industries. In a place like India, neo-corporatist thinking could easily be applied to race relations between Indians and Britons, and to inter-community relations between Indians. Although government agencies were not established to deal with particular communities, the government was nevertheless open to "representations" from these groups and could alter policy based on community concerns—the most well-known examples being the 1883 Ilbert Bill agitation by the Anglo-Indian community, and the 1906 representation from the Muslim League to the Viceory expressing concern over the status of Muslims in upcoming electoral reforms (see below).

[134] See Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change* (Munchen: Weltforum Verlag, 1974), 183.

participation of Indians in the government, and it was the Agha Khan, a Mason in Lodge *Perseverance* (and, in 1908, a founding member of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*) who headed up the Muslim League's delegation to the Viceroy in 1906. Masonry did not cause or inspire such activities or perspectives, but it could accommodate—even support—the principle of communal identity (see E.5. below).

At the same time, it cannot be forgotten that even many "nationalist" Indians who were (or would become) Masons, got their start as ethnic community reformers—for example, Dadabhai Naoroji with the "Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha," Badruddin Tyabji with the "Anjuman-i-Islam," and Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar among his Gaud Saraswat Brahmin community. They are called "nationalists" and not "communalists," not because they rejected the idea of the "sub-nation," but because they envisioned a federation of "sub-nations." This is analogous to the "federation" of daughter lodges under a Grand Lodge in Freemasonry. Pursuing both community reform and unification along federal lines were not mutually exclusive for them.

E. 3. The version of religion used by those who promoted the "class principle" in Indian Freemasonry was also something new. It had been inspired by the new antiquarian "discoveries" of the Theosophical Enlightenment—such as those made by the "Anthropological School" of Freemasonry—regarding the Aryan religions, especially Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. It is no coincidence that the lodge established specifically to attract Hindus was called *Aryan* and not *Hindu*. The term "Aryan" was not just a code word for "Hindu," rather it "imagined" a reformed, modernized, and unified Hinduism, and the lodge supported the agendas of the Prarthana Samaj and early Arya Samaj. Lodge *Zoroaster*, seems to have been working along similar lines, for it harked back to Avestic, not late (i.e., Sassanian), Zoroastrianism.

When we examine the Orientalist K.R. Cama's desire to read from the Zend-Avesta, this must be seen not as a revival of traditional Zoroastrianism, for most Parsi priests could not read or understand the Avestan of this text but relied instead on Gujarati

translations of Pahlavi translations of it. But Cama *could* read Avestan, having studied it under European scholars, and he had founded a school to train up a more educated priesthood which could read the Zend-Avesta in the original. Nevertheless, almost all Parsi priests were as yet in the traditional mold. Therefore, Cama's proposal in *Rising Star* was something new, and he had been the prime agent in the promotion of ancient Iranian studies in the Parsi community. The reformulations of religion taking place in India not only often drew on Masonic "researches," they had in many cases been led and implemented by Freemasons who had set up socio-religious reform organizations in the "profane" world, as we have seen (in Chapter 5): men like Cama, Atmaram Pandurang, N.G. Chandavarkar, and Vivekananda. Now, at the end of the 19th century, those reformulations were returning back, for better or worse, to affect the organization of the lodge.

E. 4. Another factor to consider is the role of the Theosophical Society in promoting community identity and how this might have impacted *fin de siècle* Freemasonry in Bombay. Although also part of a universal brotherhood, each Branch of the TS was allowed (if it so desired) to be composed "solely of co-religionists, as for instance, Aryas, Buddhists, Hindus [note the distinction with "Aryas"], Zoroastrians (or Parsis), Christians, Mahomedans, Jains, etc.—each under its own President, Executive Officer and Council." Thus, the habit of allowing "class"-based branches to form along religious lines appears to have its origins among the members of "Young India" who joined the Theosophical Society. Nevertheless, it was a violation of the rules for

> any officer of the Parent Society to express, by word or act, any hostility to, or preference for, any one Section, whether religious or philosophical, more than another..... All have an equal right to have the essential features of their religious belief laid before the tribunal of an impartial world. And no officer of the Society, in his capacity as an officer, has the right to preach his own sectarian views and beliefs to members assembled, except when the meetings consists of his co-

> religionists. After due warnings, violation of this rule shall be punished by suspension or expulsion....[135]

This is an attempt to include sectarian discussion in the Theosophical Society's equivalent of a Masonic lodge, while at the same time keeping it from spinning out of control and causing disunity. Masons, by contrast, were supposed to *avoid* such discussion within lodges.[136] Was the Theosophical Society influencing Freemasonry by the end of the 19th century? To be sure, it was said at the time that the model for K.R. Cama's 1907 proposal to read the Zend-Avesta in *Rising Star* was the Christian lodges. But is it a coincidence that Cama and also the Parsi priest, Jivanji J. Modi, were by this time also members of the Theosophical Society?[137] Even Maneckji Cursetji, the first Indian Freemason in western India, was one of the "distinguished visitors and devoted friends" of Blavatsky and Olcott when they lived in Bombay in the 1880s.[138] These were not isolated occurrences. It is well-known that many educated Parsis and Hindus at this time were attracted by the pride for their respective religions which the Theosophical Society instilled in Indians of various communities.[139] Its effect on the Parsis was "to give traditional Parsism, including its ritual, a new mystic-occult reinterpretation."[140] The fact that G.L.A.S.F.I. officers like Cama, and even the Grand Master from 1912 to 1919, Frank Beaman, were Theosophists suggests that Freemasonry was now absorbing ideas from the Theosophical Society—ideas which Freemasonry had spawned, but which

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[135] "The Theosophical Society, or Universal Brotherhood," in *The Theosophist*, vol. 1, no. 7 (April, 1880): 179.

[136] Although higher-degree bodies affiliated to Craft Masonry, which involved only the first three degrees, could be based on a particular religion--inevitably Christianity.

[137] See Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India*, 100. Also, for K.R. Cama, see K.J.B. Wadia, *Fifty Years of Theosophy in Bombay* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1931), 121.

[138] K.J.B. Wadia, *Fifty Years of Theosophy in Bombay*, 5.

[139] See Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India*, 99n—"At the founding of the society in 1880, approximately 50 per cent of Bombay's theosophists were Parsees.... Of the 35 speakers who appeared at theosophical events in Bombay [from 1880 to 1930]..., thirty were Parsees...; of 13 presidents of the society in Bombay from 1880 to 1930, five were Parsees and of 22 vice-presidents during the same period, 17 were Parsees...."

[140] Ibid., 100.

Theosophy developed even further and fed back to Freemasonry.[141] What is interesting from the above is that the Theosophists, like many turn-of-the-century Freemasons, thought that accentuating sub-national or sectarian identities would not hinder a broader, universal brotherhood. What is also intriguing is that Beaman appears not to have been pleased with this trend in Freemasonry (see below), and probably didn't like it in the TS either. But he had more power to attempt to influence the Craft than the TS in India. This is not to lay the growing tendency toward sectarian identity in Bombay's Masonic community in this period only at the feet of the Theosophists—after all, Lodge *Islam* was founded in 1876 (although, aside from what its name might suggest, it was *not* a lodge only for Muslims)[142]—but the fact that the rules of the TS *so explicitly* allowed for branches to be formed along sectarian lines (something British Freemasonry never explicitly did and was ambivalent towards),[143] and the fact that important Freemasons in Bombay also became Theosophists around the turn of the century, is intriguing and suggests some influence by the latter on the former. Despite permitting the formation of sectarian lodges, the TS is usually seen by historians as promoting Indian national unity;[144] therefore, it would follow that sub-national tendencies in Freemasonry need not be seen as hindering its own contributions to pan-Indian nationalism. The ultimate safeguard in both movements, it must have been felt, was initiation into a ritual brotherhood. After a few years, the TS dropped initiation, yet around the time that the Theosophists became very involved in nationalist politics, Annie Besant introduced Co-

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141 And in the area of occultism, in various higher-grade Masonic bodies, the ideas of the TS were not that novel.

142 Few Muslims seem to have been drawn to the TS, which doesn't appear to have worked Islam neatly into its religious philosophy. This may suggest a lack of influence by the TS on Muslim Masons and explain why Lodge *Islam* was one of the most diverse lodges in the period in question—at least if its list of Masters is any indication.

143 It would have been strange—perhaps even unmasonic—for a lodge to write into its by-laws that only people of one community could be admitted. Such discrimination was maintained through an informal understanding among members which expressed itself when they balloted for new members. Thus, *St. George*, for example *acquired* a reputation for being an "aristocratic" lodge. If this condition had been written into its by-laws, it would not have needed to acquire the reputation, for the conditions of membership would have been known to all from the outset.

144 See, for example, Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 249-51.

Masonry—no doubt to draw more Indians into the ritual ties of fraternity as the Indian Empire increasingly fractured down communal lines.

E. 5. Freemasonry can accommodate the sub-national or sectarian tendency up to a point because, unlike the Craft as a whole (at least the British Grand Lodges), individual lodges are free to exclude whomever they wish.[145] So it would seem that Freemasonry can promote—or rather allow for—such tendencies, while promoting a larger national identity. Yet, what is community identity but national identity writ small?[146] If we differentiate nationalisms into "inclusive" and "exclusive" types, then sub-nationalism of a militantly exclusive and chauvinistic type would have been completely opposed to the Masonic ideal of universal brotherhood. But Freemasonry's universal fraternalism is not violated so long as members of such "class" lodges treat and consider other Masons as brothers and continue to be bound to them under Masonic obligations. Thus, truly exclusivist sub-nationalism cannot take hold in Freemasonry. For example, although there are 50 Grand Lodges in the United States, but no overarching Grand Lodge of the US, American Masons nevertheless maintain fraternal relations with each other throughout the country (even during the Civil War, as I have discovered from reading the *Masonic Record of Western India*, Masons in both armies seem not to have forgotten their fraternal obligations to each other). Moreover, in their quest to establish world peace and brotherhood, most Masons do not see the need to establish an overarching Grand Lodge of the world which would subsume all the national Grand Lodges, but rather hope that a majority of men throughout the world become bound to each other by the "mystic tie" of Masonic brotherhood. So, American Masons, while never having

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145 Nor need the vote of exclusion be by majority: most lodges exclude based on one to three negative votes. This means that a small minority can veto the desire of the majority. If this becomes unbearable, members may split off and form another lodge. This is how Lodge *Rising Star* was established by those members of *Perseverance* who wanted to allow Indians into the Craft in 1843.

146 Also, the two need not be mutually exclusive: a Polish-American who promotes Polish culture through ethnic-oriented organizations may also be a thorough-going American patriot. This is what Hobsbawm calls "cultural nationalism" as opposed to "territorial nationalism," which seeks a state. See Eric. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (Calcutta: Rupa and Co., 1992), 147-48. Thus, there can be an onion-skin character to nationalism—a layering of "nationalisms" one on top of the other.

gone beyond the stage of state Grand Lodges, strongly support the idea of the American national state because it represents a larger unity of their fellow citizens than state governments can achieve (and they sing the national anthem at lodge meetings).

For Freemasons diversity was an unqualified good, and there was no fear in promoting it as long as the "mystic tie" of love harmonized the whole. Therefore, if the "class principle" in India did not get carried to an extreme—a matter of concern for many Masons—Freemasonry could accommodate it without being untrue to itself.[147] And one can safely assert that the Masons in, say, Lodge *Zoroaster*, were not among those fomenting communal hatred or violence. As P.N. Wadia stated in the same *K.R. Cama Jubilee Volume* which Haig Brown and Modi contributed to, Freemasonry "makes us stifle enmity, wrath, and dissension; and nourish love, peace, friendship, and every social virtue; it tells us to seek our happiness in the happiness we bestow, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. It informs us that we are the children of one father...."[148] therefore, despite any sub-nationalist tendencies in the late 19th century, this basic teaching of Freemasonry served as a check on things getting out of hand.

It should be realized, too, that the Indian Masonic lodges were usually communally mixed to some degree (even if a limited one), and Masons from different communities did transcend communal barriers to socialize in the lodges. K.R. Cama's 1877 speech in Chapter 8 clearly proves this (and recall that he pointed out the uniqueness of such fraternizing).[149] The communally exclusivist sentiment expressed by a lodge like *Zoroaster*, or by K.R. Cama's proposal to read from the Zend Avesta in

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[147] In November 1913, Lord Ampthill, ex-Governor of Madras, now a Pro-Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, issued a circular in which he addressed the issue of professionally-based class lodges (although his conclusion applies equally well to all types of class lodges): "The establishment of 'Class' Lodges is a recognised and growing custom; but there is a distinct limit beyond which this practice might become contrary to, and subversive of, the true spirit of Masonry.'" In K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961*, 44.

[148] P.N. Wadia, "The Admonitions of Freemasonry," in Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, ed., *The K.R. Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume*, 75.

[149] See Khurshedji Rustomji Cama, "A Discourse on Freemasonry Among the Natives of Bombay" (delivered at the Freemasons' Jamshedi Naoroz Festival on Wednesday, the 21st of March 1877)(Bombay: Printed at the Times of India Steam Press, 1877), 6.

Rising Star in 1906 (which, anyway, was vetoed) must be contextualized by the fact that it was not uncommon for Masons to be members of more than one lodge. Also, the right of Masons to visit other lodges would have made real exclusivity theoretically impossible. Even in the third decade of the 20th century, Lord Cornwallis, the Deputy Grand Master of England, observed, probably around 1927, when he toured India on behalf of the Grand Lodge:

> We have seen as many as five Volumes of the Sacred Law in use at one and the same time, and Brethren of the following among other races, taken at random—Europeans, Parsis, Chinese, Burmese, Hindus, Americans, Ceylonese, Punjabis, Mohammedans, Sikhs, Armenians, Greeks, Bengalis, Jews, Aracanese, and Madrassis—participating in the Ceremonies. The Brotherhood of Man, under such circumstances, becoming a living reality.[150]

This is the normative image of Freemasonry that has been presented throughout most of this chapter. Of course, this was said after the First World War, when any communal tendencies in Indian lodges from the few decades before the war seemed to be reversing.[151] Such a trend may have been due to a growing awareness of, and revulsion over, the extremes to which the "class principle" could be carried in the larger society (this was an an era of increasing communalism at the mass level), combined with a felt-need to counter such communalism through a reinvigoration of Masonic cosmopolitanism.

Even in the pre-War period, however, not all or even most Masons in Bombay found the tendency towards "class"-based lodges desirable and there were important voices against it. Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, for example, was founded in 1908 in reaction to the trend. In his speech at the opening meeting of the lodge, Frank Beaman, the Master, said that as "the founders of Lodge 'Imperial Brotherhood' saw that in this

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[150] Lord Cornwallis, quoted in G.E. Walker, "250 Years of Masonry in India: A Study in Resolved Discords," in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076), vol. 92 (1979): 172.

[151] In 1935, for example, we see the formation of Lodge *Mother India*, in Bombay which has had Masters from diverse communal backgrounds, from its formation to at least 1995—see, for example, "Lodge *Mother India* Installation Programme" for 1995. Courtesy of Mr. Somappa R. Suvarna, Western Regional Grand Lodge of India, Bombay.

splendid Imperial City there did not exist one actually, as well as theoretically Masonic lodge; that is a Lodge which should embrace every worthy Masonic Brother and welcome his co-operation in the cause of Freemasonry, regardless of colour, sect or race,..." they decided to found a lodge which was "cosmopolitan, that is, Masonic."[152] In other words, for Beaman "class lodges" were *unmasonic*. Beaman was also Grand Master of A.S.F.I. at this time, so his words and sentiments would have carried some weight in the Masonic community. *Imperial Brotherhood* will be discussed in depth later, but suffice it to say that it did bring in Masons from all backgrounds. Beaman's contention that there was no other "cosmopolitan" lodge in Bombay at the time should be seen as a reference to "mixed" European-Indian lodges (recall, for example, *Holmesdale in the East* above). Indian lodges, as we have seen, did by and large maintain mixed membership in terms of the different Indian communities (although not so evenly balanced as *Imperial Brotherhood* was to be). In the final analysis, then, separation along communal lines was not as important in the Masonic world of Bombay as the divide between Indian and European lodges. Yet even here, while the situation was not what it could have been (as Beaman lamented),[153] inter-lodge visits, which seem to have been frequent, honorary memberships, and service in the higher district bodies created more opportunities for interracial socializing than was possible in the outside world. But the unwillingness of a number of European lodges to take in many—or any—Indian members[154] throughout the period of the Raj and especially in Presidency towns compels one to wonder what the history of the Raj might have been if the lodges had been truly "cosmopolitan."

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[152] Justice F.C.O. Beaman (Lodge Master), inaugural speech at Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, February 14, 1908, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Appendix A (pp. 30-35), 30-31. Courtesy of Dr. Viraf Dhalla.

[153] Beaman, in his statement, also does not factor in the "mixed" lodges outside but near Bombay, such as Lodge *Barton* in Lonavla, half the way up the Ghats to Poona, and Lodge *St. Andrew's in the East* in Poona, etc.

[154] Sometimes on the negative ballot of just one lodge member.

IV. MASONS AND POLITICAL MODERATION

As has been demonstrated, in late 19th- and early 20th-century Bombay, Freemasonry provided an arena for unofficial socializing between important British administrators and Indian modernizing elites, based on a shared social ideology. That we see, as well, an overlapping membership between Indian Freemasons and the early Indian National Congress, and that the early I.N.C. shared many of the same values as Freemasonry, suggests that Freemasonry provided a covert arena linking "nationalist" Indians to British officialdom. This suggests another reason—along with the standard ones of western education, etc., given by most historians—why, when push came to shove, Indian "nationalists" of the early phase of Indian nationalism remained loyal to king and empire and spurned extremism. Indeed, Indian Masons were overwhelmingly moderate in their politics. First, the monarchs were themselves Masons, or at least patrons of Freemasonry, like Queen Victoria; second, the empire provided a more universal field in which to strive for universal brotherhood than just India alone.

In December 1875, the District Grand Lodge of Bengal sent a deputation of five of its officers (four Europeans and one Indian) to address, and declare their loyalty to, the Prince of Wales as their Grand Master during his trip to Calcutta. "We pray," they said, "that your Government of our Order may endure for many years to come, that it may unite the Brethren in the closest ties of unity, and bind all good and loyal Masons to your Rule."[155] After speaking, the deputation gave the Prince a small casket containing the address. The first signature on the address was that of the Indian District Grand Registrar—*and* first President-to-be of the Indian National Congress—W.C. Bonnerjee. Thus, Freemasonry, fostering as it did loyalty to the British monarchy, was ideally suited to the imperial enterprise, but only insofar as discriminatory practices were replaced by "fair play" in a timely fashion. This ultimately did not happen in India, but the hope that

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[155] See Minutes of the Quarterly Communication of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal, for March 21, 1876; in *MRWI*, vol. 13, no. 3 (June 1876): 111.

it would remained longest in the hearts of political moderates, and no doubt most Masons.

A. Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood:*

In sentencing B.G. Tilak, in July 1908, to transportation to Burma for six years for inciting Indians to political violence through the press, Justice Dinshaw D. Davar (1856-1916), a founding member of the newly formed Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* (est. February 1908),[156] said to Tilak:

> It seems to me that it must be a diseased mind, a most perverted mind that could say the articles you have written are legitimate weapons in political agitations. They are seething with sedition; they preach violence; they speak of murder with approval and the cowardly and atrocious act of committing murders with bombs not only seems to meet with your approval but you hail the advent of the bomb in India as if something has come to India for its good....[157]

Ironically, in Tilak's trial in 1897 Dinshaw Davar had been the junior partner (along with Mr. Pugh of Calcutta) *defending* him![158] Davar's statement in 1908 reflects the changed times and the horror which politically moderate Indians felt towards the violent tactics being resorted to by extremists in the early 20th century. Names like Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh were a source of great anxiety. For Masons, the requirement to obey the laws of the land, and the social familiarity and fraternization which existed between Bombay's Indian and British "brethren" (despite the existence of "European" lodges) reveal a hitherto unknown factor in explaining the moderation of Bombay's political elites. Plus, Indian Masons could win important fights for parity with the British in the "profane" world, and this no doubt encouraged them to think that the system was fundamentally good, even if it needed adjustments. Dinshaw Davar, for example, "fought for the equality of rights of Indian and European Barristers practising in the Bombay High Court," in the late 19th century. It was he "who was responsible for [the] eradication of

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[156] Dinshaw Dhanjibhai Davar had been initiated in Lodge *Aryan* in 1887—see MRA, entry #71. See also *Membership Registry of Imperial Brotherhood* (MRIB), entry #4.

[157] See *Full and Authentic Report of the Tilak Trial—1908* (Bombay, 1908), 18; in Stanley Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 225.

[158] See H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, vol. 1, 150.

all the distinctions that had existed between the two groups."[159] Thus, Indian Masons were succeeding in the quest for parity both within and outside the lodge. For them there was simply no need to become radical.

The Masonic lodges of Bombay may therefore be viewed as centers of political moderation, and Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* seems to have been created specifically for this purpose. At the first meeting of *Imperial Brotherhood* on February 14, 1908, Davar's fellow Justice of the Bombay High Court, Frank C.O. Beaman, I.C.S.—first master of the lodge—while acknowledging that the rules of Masonry "preclude all direct meddling with politics," and that "no political question will ever be mentioned, much less discussed, in Lodge 'Imperial Brotherhood,'" went on to elaborate on one of the main aims of the lodge, stating that

> indirectly there are many ways in which we believe and hope it [i.e., the lodge] may contribute, when its influence has spread,... to a better and clearer understanding of the bases of many political questions in India.... In such a climate, the inflammatory and bad symptoms of all political discussion and agitation in this country would necessarily disappear. And with minds in tune and anxious to see not what is worst but what is best in our fellow subjects all those who are concerned in politics, would approach the solution of the complex problems they have to face and solve in a spirit of conciliation and broad sympathy. In a word, by adopting strictly Masonic methods, by generating confidence, in place of suspicion and distrust, by substituting love for hate wherever the name "Imperial Brotherhood" is spoke and its influence is felt, we hope to prepare the way to a saner and more profitable Indian politic. This, I think, we may lawfully do.[160]

It is in the context of this aim—which Justice Davar, as a founding member of the lodge, would have fully endorsed—that we can understand how most Indian Masons must have viewed Tilak and his tactics. Referring to the troublous times of 1907 and 1908, Beaman goes one to say:

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[159] Ibid., 150.

[160] Justice F.C.O. Beaman (Lodge Master), inaugural speech at Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, February 14, 1908, in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C., Appendix A (pp. 30-35), 31.

> Half at least of the acerbities of life in India, half did I say? nine-tenths would be nearer the truth, are attributable to want of understanding. The races stand apart; religions keep at arms length, sects foment bitterness and strife; and each not knowing his neighbour takes him for an enemy. This is the condition Lodge "Imperial Brotherhood" would cure. She will step in, and using the gentle arts of Masonry, evoke better feelings, nobler aspirations. She will bid every one within reach of her command or hearing of her exhortations to look upon his neighbour not as an enemy but as a brother. If we only understand it is so easy to forgive.... Through the broad and far spreading channels of Masonry the "Imperial Brotherhood" intends to send forth over a land fevered with discord and misunderstanding the healing waters of peace and goodwill, of mutual comprehension and love.[161]

Appropriately enough, the iconography of the lodge banner depicted a large globe, on one side of which stood Britannia next to the British lion, and on the other side, Saraswati, next to her "vehicle," the peacock (see Illustration 5). This was a new vision of empire—one where India stood as an equal partner with Britain, and they ruled the world together. The choice of Britannia was a logical one—Britain only has one female symbol, after all. But the choice of Saraswati, from among all the Hindu female deities was interesting, as she is the goddess of the arts and learning—a far cry from the militant *Shaiva* imagery invoked by Tilak and his followers (although, ironically, the trident and lion of Britannia are also associated with Shiva and Parvati. Perhaps this was an attempt to coopt the iconography of the militants to the service of Crown and Empire!)

Imperial Brotherhood had a high-powered membership. Of the twenty-four founding members, six were Europeans and the rest Indians (eight Muslims, four Parsis, four Hindus, and one Jew—Sir Sassoon J. David).[162] Not only were there Justices of the High Court, such as Beaman, Davar, Narayan Chandavarkar, and Abdeali Kajiji, but there were also important businessmen and captains of industry, like Sir Dorab Tata, Sir Sassoon David, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim (the second baronet) and others of the

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[161] Ibid., 32.

[162] The founding members notwithstanding, this was not a predominantly Muslim lodge: Hindus quickly start to make their way into the lodge in a larger proportion to what they start out with.

Currimbhoy clan, and Narotam M. Goculdas. From the Princely community came the Agha Khan, who was also the living Imam of the Ismaili (Khoja) Muslim community.[163]

Important as these men were in Bombay, Beaman's call for the lodge to bring moderation and peace to Indian politics was a voice crying in the wilderness at the time. Nevertheless, its members do seem to have been associated with moderate politics, for example, siding with G.K. Gokhale against Tilak in 1915. In recognition of India's contribution to the war effort during the First World War, "the British government had begun thinking in terms of what the next advance should be toward the granting of responsible government to India."[164] Lord Willingdon, Governor of Bombay, and Master of the *Imperial Brotherhood* at the time, asked Gokhale "to suggest in writing what he would consider the minimum reform grant to satisfy Indian expectations." Gokhale wrote to Pherozeshah Mehta and the Agha Khan—both Masons—to consult about this. The Agha Khan, whose Masonic Master Willingdon was, even went to Poona to talk to Gokhale about the matter, as the latter was too sick to travel, and he "prevailed upon Gokhale to draft a statement of his ideas concerning the reforms."[165] Although I have no evidence that Gokhale was a Mason, many of his associates in the political life of the Bombay Presidency and of India undoubtedly were: men like Mehta, Naoroji, the Agha Khan, Rash Behari Ghosh, etc. And Gokhale's "Servants of India Society" reflected ideals which had long been promoted by Freemasonry.

B. The Moderate Party:

The Moderate Party (later called the National Liberal Federation), was founded in 1918 in the wake of Tilak and his followers having grabbed power in the Congress Party in 1917. The Moderates supported the Montague-Chelmsford reforms which had been proposed in late 1917 in the face of extremist criticism that the "Montford" reform

[163] See Appendix J in Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, No. 1041, S.C. It must have been strange for Currimbhoy Ibrahim, an Ismaili himself, to address his Imam and the head of the Ismailis, the Agha Khan, as "brother," and vice-versa, in the lodge!

[164] Stanley Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale*, 271.

[165] Ibid.

proposals did not go far enough in granting autonomy to Indians. The new party was peopled with Masons, especially members of *Imperial Brotherhood*. Indeed, that lodge appears to have been the one of choice for Bombay's Moderate Party members who were Masons.

Although neither Surendranath Banerjea, who was President of the first Moderate Party conference, or Dinshaw Wacha, who was Chairman of the Reception Committee (of the Subjects Committee) appear to have been Masons (I am pretty sure about Wacha at least), of the ten Vice-Chairmen, four were Masons (40%)—all from Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*. Of the nine Secretaries of the committee, at least three (33%) were Masons. At least eight (35%) of the twenty-three elected representatives to the Subjects Committee from Bombay were Masons. I do not have the necessary data to examine the Masonic affiliation of the elected representatives from other parts of India. Of the above fifteen Masons, six (40%) were Hindus, five (33%) were Parsis, and four (27%) were Muslims.

At the conference, a member of *Imperial Brotherhood* and one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Reception Committee, Sir Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar, gave a speech defending the proposed "Montford" reforms, although he conceded they were not perfect. Exhibiting both his knowledge of constitutions and a devotion to constitutionalism (which Freemasonry had no doubt in part instilled in him), he referred to the Athenian dictator, Solon, who upon leaving Athenians said that he left them with a constitution which was "not best fitted for the Athenians but one which, under the circumstances, was tolerable to the prejudices and diverse classes of the Athenian population.... That principle runs through the English constitution, that principle...runs through the American constitution and that principle should run through all healthy constitutions...."[166] An

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[166] Sir Narayan G. Chandavarkar, November 2, 1918; in *Report of the Proceedings of the First Session of the All-India Conference of the Moderate Party* (held at Bombay, Nov. 1-2, 1918) (Bombay: The Times Press, 1919), 68.

allowance for pluralism and diversity, then, was an integral part of good constitutions—as it is in the federal structure of Freemasonry.

Touching on the old charge of many British (probably voiced first by Viceroy Dufferin) that the western-educated Indians represented a "microscopic minority" out of touch with the Indian masses and incapable of fulfilling their needs, Chandavarkar declared:

> The rulers,—I will not describe them as foreign, because I regard the Britons as one of our own, but who, somehow or other, by social traditions and by climatic conditions, cannot live in this country,—when they pass laws they no doubt consult us, but after all, if you want to do anything for a man, even if you want to punish him, you must ask him where the shoe pinches.[167] Therefore, the work of the administration must be in our hands, because we know where the shoe pinches….[168]

Referring to similar objections by anti-Federalists in America in the 1780s that the proposed Constitution would give power to the property owners and educated people at the expense of the masses, Chandavarkar counters: "But, said the Federalists, 'that may be. But we are after all of one blood; we are all one people, and we can know more than any one else what community of interests between us is.' Therefore the educated classes do not stand divorced from the masses."[169] There is an ambivalence here: on the one hand, Chandavarkar calls the British "one of our own" (a consequence of lodge interactions no doubt!), yet they are not of "one blood" with Indians. Between the western-educated Indians and the Indian masses he invokes a community of blood and nationhood which leaves out the British. This reflects the protean nature of Freemasonry, which, while universalist, can also accommodate the more parochial identities of nation and community. But the nation which Chandavarkar is speaking of also involves a union of two elements—the western educated and the masses—and since the British are

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[167] This was an unfortunate consequence of the resolution to the "shoe question" in favor of European footwear discussed in a previous section!

[168] Sir Narayan G. Chandavarkar, November 2, 1918; in *Report of the Proceedings of the First Session of the All-India Conference of the Moderate Party*, 70.

[169] Ibid.

denying the possibility of this larger union, Chandavarkar has no choice but to marginalize them to some extent. Chandavarkar concludes on an optimistic note and supports a cosmopolitan liberal nationalism, saying that "the world's conscience has been roused and God above has been preparing the whole world and the British Empire and India in particular, for a future which, I hope, we deserve with that love of country, with that love of humanity which India claims for us as her sons."[170] Here, Chandavarkar combines patriotism, love of the world, and the idea of progress: a thoroughly Masonic perspective, one in which patriotism and nationalism do not straiten one's universal outlook and duty to humanity as a whole, but are part of it.

This resembles notions of nationalism put forward in Germany by the Mason J.G. Herder,[171] and in Italy by Giuseppe Mazzini. Mazzini, a sometime Freemason,[172] believed that each nation, in pursuing its inherent and divinely ordained spiritual destiny, could never go to war but would instead live peacefully with other nations,[173] just as Masons believed that toleration of diversity, combined with an underlying belief in the brotherhood of man, would lead to peace:

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[170] Ibid., 73.

[171] See Robert Beachy, "Recasting Cosmopolitanism: German Freemasonry and Regional Identity in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33.2 (Winter 2000): 267; June 18, 2001 <http://128.220.50.88/journals/eighteenth-century_studies/v033/33.2beachy.html>—"Ironically, some of the most prominent theorists of German nationalism including J. G. Herder and J. G. Fichte were themselves Masons, demonstrating the role of the German lodges as an institution of German cultural life. Herder's philosophy of cultural nationalism became a manifesto of national identity with an influence reaching far beyond Central Europe. Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808) served as a call for national revival during the wars of liberation from 1813-1815." Herder and Fichte, in speaking of a nation of *all* Germans, betray their cosmopolitan Masonic ideology, especially in light of the political division of the Germans in the early 19th century.

[172] See "The Freemasons in Italy," in the *Daily News* (London); repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 12, no. 2 (May 1875): 49—"Mazzini, a Freemason, was also a Carbonaro, but he substituted the Young Italy party for both."

[173] See Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, 158-59: "While it may seem to undermine integral states today, nationalism once helped to fashion the states that forged the Enlightenment. As a consequence, it gained considerable momentum and a modernizing cachet of its own with the rationalistic.... Revolutions spawned by the Enlightenment in France, America, and Germany. The aspiration to a 'liberal nationalism' that united the cosmopolitan ideals of liberty and equality with the communitarian ideals of fraternity and solidarity motivated the Jacobins and the American founders alike, and permitted peoples bound together be culture and history nonetheless to fashion constitutions founded on rights and reason.... Liberal and romantic nationalists from Herder to Mazzini subscribed at once to a religion of humanity deifying a single, cosmopolitan conception of human nature *and* a vigorous nationality: in Mazzini's arching rhetoric 'nationality is the role assigned by God to each people in the work of humanity.'"

> The domain of Freemasonry is not circumscribed by political boundaries; her sympathies reach like the rays of heaven, every nation and clime. Does not the contemplation of this truth expand the mind, and fill it with enlarged views of the mission of humanity? Are not the ties which bind a Mason to his fellow, types of that ideal commonwealth where brotherhood and peace shall ever reign?[174]

It was only when Mazzini's ideas were married to Social Darwinism in the late 19th century that nationalism became competitive and nasty.

A little after Chandavarkar spoke, the well-known barrister, Hormusji A. Wadya, another member of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*,[175] delivered a short speech in which he adopted a more assertive tone towards the British than had Chandavarkar. After saying that Indians should "gratefully avail" themselves of the assistance of Britons in India when pursuing their political goals, nevertheless,

> while accepting that let us be careful to put our attitude towards these English friends of ours beyond all doubt and I venture to say that our attitude towards them is this—With them, if they will, without them if they will not, in spite of them if they refuse to come to our side and seek to hinder or thwart us in our efforts to do what we are bent upon doing—to attain for our country the secure enjoyment of the blessings of that only divine right, which the civilised world acknowledges to-day, the divine right of self-government. (*Hear, hear, and applause.*)[176]

Although Wadya here takes a tougher line with the British, and presumably his British "brothers," he is no less Masonic in his outlook. He is merely demanding for India what Masonry has taught him in the lodge: that all men are equal brothers, and that positions of authority should be based on merit, not on birth. If the British were going to thwart this principle when it came to the government of the Raj, then "in spite of them" Indians would have *svaraj*.

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[174] "The Earl of Dalhousie and the Scottish Craft," the *London Freemason*; repr. in *MRWI*, vol. 7, no. 11 (February 1871), 407-08.

[175] Wadya joined the lodge in 1914. See MRIB, entry #79.

[176] Hormusji A. Wadya, November 2, 1918; in *Report of the Proceedings of the First Session of the All-India Conference of the Moderate Party*, 75.

V. CONCLUSION

The emergence of a nationalist movement in 19th-century India revolved around three major issues: a demand for respect from, and parity with, the British who governed India; inter-communal cooperation and a vision of the Indian nation as a pluralistic whole (which may be seen as a type of parity—the parity of the parts within a whole); and the reform of society along modernizing lines (see the objects of the Indian National Congress at the beginning of this chapter). While Indian Freemasons differed in their political orientations—as they do everywhere—their ideology and activities "enabled" Indian nationalism by contributing to all three projects, which were, after all, the Enlightenment projects of "enlightened" government, the removal of irrational social barriers (such as race, caste, etc.), and social and individual perfectibility.

A. At the first Congress in 1885, Dadabhai Naoroji explained what drew the western-educated Indians politically to the British: "'What attaches us to this foreign rule with deeper loyalty than even our own past Native rule, is the fact that Britain is the parent of free and representative Government and that we, as her subjects and children, are entitled to inherit the great blessing of freedom and representation.'"[177] In the front ranks of Indian leaders in the early Congress Party (and even before) were a number of Masons, as we have seen: Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Narayan Chandavarkar, among those in Bombay. In Bengal, there was W.C. Bonnerjee, Man Mohan Ghosh, and Rash Behari Ghosh, and probably others whom research in lodges there would no doubt turn up.

What these men wanted was respect, to be treated like equals, to be "brothers" with the British in running India, just as they were "brothers" with them in the lodges. For many British Masons it was *supposed* to be "Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!" outside the lodge and "Brother!" inside, as Kipling had written,[178] but how could this double

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[177] Dadabhai Naoroji, quoted in Briton Martin, Jr., *New India, 1885*, 298.

[178] See Rudyard Kipling, "The Mother Lodge," in *Collected Verse of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1907), 318-20.

standard be maintained—especially after tasting of Masonic equality with British officials? Indian Masons even got to call the Queen's son, the Duke of Connaught, "brother" within the lodge when he was Commander-in-Chief in the late 19th century. This was something no Indian Maharaja could do (unless he was a Mason, too).

It should not be surprising that Masons were at the forefront of the self-government movement, from Dadabhai Naoroji on. They had, after all, been achieving ever more important positions in governing the Craft in India over the previous decades, and it is clear from their statements in the "profane" world that they wanted, *and expected*, to attain analogous positions outside the lodge. For, in the early, or "moderate," phase of Indian nationalism, Indians did not want to undo British imperialism; they merely wanted to extend it to include them as equal partners. But the British would wait too long to transfer the "great blessing of freedom and representation" that Naoroji spoke of, and the loyalty and patience of even many Indian Masons would eventually erode. Given Freemasonry's stress on the family ideal, it must have been emotionally difficult for Indian Masons to accommodate themselves to secession from the imperial Center. In the mid-19th century, the Masonic scholar and Anglican clergyman, George Oliver, had described the relationship of a Mason to the ruler of the state in terms very reminiscent of Confucianism: "As you have a filial reverence for your parents, so, as a Mason, you must have a patriotic veneration for the ruler of your country."[179] But such obligations were not the only thing tying Indian Masons to the British Crown: the Crown was also the center of the Craft in Britain and the Empire. In his 1906 Presidential address to the Congress Dadabhai Naoroji even referred to his erstwhile Grand Master and now King-Emperor, Edward VII, who hoped that "'throughout my dominions the grant of free institutions will be followed....'"[180] It must have been with great difficulty that the aging

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179 George Oliver, *The Book of the Lodge*, 3rd ed. (Wellingborough, Northhampshire, England: Aquarian Press, 1986; orig. 1864), 120.

180 Dadabhai Naoroji, Presidential Address in Calcutta in 1906; quoted in Annie Besant, *How India Wrought For Freedom: The Story of the National Congress Told From Official Records*, 445.

Naoroji admitted in the same address that since "my early efforts, I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel."[181] Was it his Masonic ties which kept him from rebelling? If so, they did not keep him from introducing a word that had not hitherto been mentioned on a Congress platform: *svaraj*.[182] For Naoroji, this meant self-government like that enjoyed in Britain's "white" Dominions; for others, like Tilak, it would be used to demand something more.

On December 17, 1945, in the famous "Red Fort Trial," the barrister Bhulabhai Jivanji Desai, who had been initiated in Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* in 1910,[183] rose to defend three Indian National Army officers accused of ordering or carrying out executions of fellow soldiers who had deserted or tried to instigate desertion from the I.N.A. The charge against them hinged on whether or not the I.N.A. was a rebel army whose aim had been to "wage war against the king." "'What is now on trail before the court," Desai declared, "is the right to wage war with immunity on the part of a subject race for their liberation.'"[184] After showing that international law recognized this right, and that even Churchill had asserted that the Second World War was being fought to liberate the peoples of the world, Desai raised the question of allegiance to the King. He cited the case of Britain's recent war-time ally, America, in 1776, when it too had been bound in allegiance to the British monarch but then had repudiated that allegiance. Desai read an excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, which asserted that the United Colonies were "'absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political

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[181] Dadabhai Naoroji, Presidential Address in Calcutta in 1906, in *Dadabhai Naoroji's Speeches and Writings* (Madras: Natesan, 1910), 86; quoted in Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India*, 178.

[182] Naoroji also "appealed for union between Hindus and Muhammadans, for Indian emancipation depended on this. Social Reform and Industrial progress were also needed." See Annie Besant, *How India Wrought For Freedom*, 447.

[183] See MRIB, entry #49.

[184] Quoted in Amitav Ghosh, "India's Untold War of Independence," *The New Yorker* magazine, June 23 and 30, 1997: 120.

connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.'"[185]

When we remember how Frank Beaman, the first Master of *Imperial Brotherhood*, hoped that his new lodge would help bind India and Britain closer together, and when we recall Dinshaw Davar's sentencing of Tilak for his sanctioning of bomb-throwing and revolutionary violence (which, in retrospect, was a paltry crime compared to officering an army against the British, as did these members of the I.N.A.!), it is ironic that a member of this same lodge should now call—not for imperial brotherhood—but for the complete dissolution of political ties between Britain and India. And yet this was perhaps not so strange or ironic. After all, the American revolution which Desai invoked involved Masons like Franklin, Paine, Lafayette, and the man who actually led the army against the British, George Washington.

It is fitting that Indians at the twilight of the British empire in India should have invoked the end of the British empire in the American colonies. For in both cases, the successful middling classes had not been treated like equals by Britain. In America the creole Anglo-Americans were taken for granted and snubbed as ungrateful bumpkins by the British back in Britain (especially in Parliament), and in India, race was the dividing issue. The British had done much to share power with Indians by the 1940s, but the rate at which they had done so was seen as too slow. Things had gone more quickly in the Masonic world: Temulji Nariman, a member of *Imperial Brotherhood*, became the first Indian Grand Master of the G.L.A.S.F.I., serving from 1932-38, and in the 1880s K.R. Cama, the Deputy Grand Master, had "ruled" G.L.A.S.F.I. for a short time (he also became head of the Royal Arch Order in Bombay in the 1890s). In the English Constitution's District Grand Lodge of Bombay, D.D. Mistry, a Past Deputy District Grand Master, ruled the District for a short time in 1915. In 1944, another Parsi, Sohrab Davar, was the first Indian to be appointed D.G.M. by the Grand Lodge of England

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[185] Ibid.

(admittedly, the English bodies moved more slowly than the Scottish in letting Indians rule, but both moved more quickly than the British Raj, which, if British strength had not been dissipated by the Second World War, might have waited much after 1947 to let Indians rule at the apex of government.

This slowness to rule equally with Indians was seen as unfair and "arbitrary" by Indian Masons like Desai—as it had been by Chandavarkar and Wadya thirty years before, and by Naoroji fifty years before that—and Britain, which had been praised by this class of Indian as a fount of liberty and free institutions (which fitted in so well with Masonic concepts of good government) had come to appear despotic. The British Raj had never fully implemented the parity contained in Victoria's Declaration of 1858—a parity which Freemasonry had inculcated and created a thirst for in its Indian members. The western-educated Indians had started as "Entered Apprentices" in the government of the Raj, been passed to the "Fellow Craft" degree through accumulated experience, and some had even been raised to the degree of "Master" by their merit and responsibility (as in appointments to Legislative Councils, etc.), but the British refused to allow them to rule as "District Grand Masters" in the Raj, as they had allowed Indians (in accordance with the teachings of Freemasonry) to rule in the district Grand Lodges. This must have been a bitter experience for Indian Masons, for if any group among the western-educated met British standards for competency to rule, it was they. Of course, the real reason was simple and ugly, and was expressed by none other than the first Indian Mason in Bombay. In the early 1840s, when Maneckji Cursetji had wanted to become a Mason, a number of members of the only lodge in Bombay at the time (*Perseverance*) opposed him "'not for any individual disqualifications or demerits, but solely because I was a native. They argued that if they opened the portals of Masonry to one native they would be obliged to open to all and they would not know where to end and demurred my being admitted to the Craft.'"[186] The majority of British officials in the Raj felt the same way regarding the

[186] Maneckji Cursetji, April 25, 1862; in Appendix J of D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 387.

higher government positions, especially in the I.C.S. Yet this betrayed their own declarations and western-educated Indians'—especially western-educated Indian Masons'—expectations. Little wonder, then, that Indian Masons are to be found at the forefront of the early struggle for parity.

A French scholar of Freemasonry, Serge Hutin, has written that: "La Maçonnnerie s'efforcera en vain de promouvoir l'assimilation des élites indiennes à la communauté britannique: l'admission dan les Loges d'hindouistes, de musulmans, de parsis n'empechêra pas—au contraire—l'avènement des ideaux nationalistes."[187] In fact, Indian Masons assimilated only too well to the British imperial community—to the point of becoming "brothers" to the English, Scots, Irish, and Welsh—and they strove to obtain the rights and privileges which attended this fraternal assimilation. This was the genesis of the nationalist impulse among the western-educated Indians. They envisioned and expected to live in an empire of nationalities, in which Indians played an equal role with whites in governing the Indian Empire. Unfortunately for them, the British were simultaneously forging a national identity based on their superior position in the Empire. In the contest between these two nationalisms, British and Indian, the middle path of an imperial brotherhood based on parity would necessarily lose out. Indian Masons, then, who had gone a long way in reaching parity with the British in the lodge, sought the same thing in the Raj as nationalists, but were to find that parity there was "blocked," or at least too slow in coming.

[187] Serge Hutin, *Les Francs-Maçons* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1961), 126-27. ("Masonry would strive in vain to promote the assimilation of the Indian elites to the British community: admission of Hindus, Muslims, [and] Parsis into the lodges would not prevent the advent of nationalist ideas—quite the contrary." My translation).

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION, OR "PARTING ON THE SQUARE"

In this dissertation I have sought to drive home two large points: first, that Freemasonry played an important, if complicated, role in attempting to establish fraternal feelings between Britons in India and elite Indians—both aristocrats and, especially, the western-educated; second, that Freemasonry helped western-educated Indians in formulating—"imagining," to use Benedict Anderson's term—a type of nationalism which was ethnically and religiously pluralistic, constitutional, and socially reformist. In the first case, of course, fraternal feelings between Britons and Indians did not overcome white racism wholly, but it did mitigate such racism very substantially at certain levels.

In 1928, Arthur Finan, a Grand Lodge A.S.F.I. officer in the 1920s, at the conclusion of his *History of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, takes up the subject of the "Other" and the "Brother," and declares that Freemasonry has "closely bound and cemented into one solid fabric, the Brethren of the East and of the West."[1] Moreover, he states:

> Many writers comparing the characteristics of West and East have confirmed the old saying:—
>
> "EAST IS EAST, AND WEST IS WEST"
>
> but to my mind, reviewing the marvelous results of the relationship existing between the British and the Indian, due in a great measure to Freemasonry, this old saying might well be altered to read:—
>
> "EAST IS WEST, AND WEST IS EAST."

Reflecting on the legacy of imperialism, Finan states that countries "have been conquered and occupied, and nations subjugated[,] even the religion of the invader has been forced upon the conquered but has the victory ever been complete? History tells us the answer in the negative."[2] Only Freemasonry can bind the hearts, Finan declares. And to what is due the success of Freemasonry? The "first of the Ancient Charges, concerning 'GOD

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[1] A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, 1837-1924* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., Printers, 1928), 244.
[2] Ibid.

AND RELIGION' which is the foundation, the bed-rock upon which our structure is erected."[3]

And "what of the future?" Finan asks. Recognizing that Indians and Masons are coming of age, and witnessing no doubt the rising power of Indian nationalism, he answers: "... may it not be said with truth that 'the children of today are the nation of tomorrow'?"[4] But Finan is elusive about when that tomorrow is to be. In the meantime, he ends his book by praising the good government, prestige, and dignity of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India in words that recall a proud imperial official reflecting on the grandeur and blessings of the Raj:

> The Powers of the Grand Lodge A.S.F.I. it must never be forgotten are extensive in the extreme, and far reaching even to the uttermost corners of India. Its administration, its judicial decisions, its declared policy are watched not only by those Freemasons subject to its administration, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland, but by the Grand Bodies of all Sister Constitutions throughout the world.
>
> The vastness of its jurisdiction, its simple, efficient and dignified method of administration, administering as it does, the largest District in the world, entitle it to the respect of the leading Grand Bodies in the Universe.[5]

In the end, the Masonic promise of imperial brotherhood did not win the day in the outer, political world. In 212/13, the Roman emperor, Caracalla, formalized in law the notion of a united and egalitarian empire with a firmly Roman identity by extending Roman citizenship to most of his subjects.[6] The British—self-conscious latter-day Romans that they were—knew of this, but could not bring themselves to go this far in dealing with non-white subjects.[7] In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they did not

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[3] Ibid. This refers to the "charge" mentioned in the Masonic *Constitutions* of the early 18th century that members, "by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd," must believe in a Supreme Being. Thus, religious toleration and monotheism are simultaneously promoted—in other words, latitudinarianism.

[4] Ibid., 245.

[5] Ibid.

[6] See Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 58.

[7] See Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 149: "Comparisons of this sort between Roman and British imperialism involved a dubious and also dangerous presumption: that a nation... could have the best interests of its subjects at heart

even extend Dominion status or Home Rule to Indians in their scheme for imperial federation. Yet, for many Indians, Masons and otherwise, the Caracallian model was precisely what they were after.

Much as Viceroy Dufferin and A.O. Hume envisioned for the Indian National Congress, the lodge could also be seen by British Masons—many of them British officials—as a "safety valve" for their increasingly demanding and vocal handiwork, namely, the western-educated Indian. Freemasonry must have seemed to them an even safer safety valve than the Congress, since the leadership of Freemasonry in India was in the hands of the colonial administrators, sometimes Governors, Viceroys, or Commanders-in-Chief, sometimes High Court judges or Municipal Council heads. Seen from this perspective, Freemasonry was an ideal tool for "system maintenance" within the Raj. While it had not been created for this purpose, the British were not slow to try to apply it to this end. Yet, just as the British Raj contained ideological contradictions—ideas of the unity and equality of all imperial subjects *versus* theories of racial superiority and Western cultural exceptionalism—so too did a number of British Masons see Freemasonry not as a tool of imperialism, but as having great deeds to do in India by uniting the governors and the governed—a notion which was applied by all British Masons to varying degrees, depending, of course, on how seriously they took the principle of brotherhood.

When all is said and done Freemasonry was extremely dangerous to the privileged status of the British in India, for, by allowing Indians into Freemasonry in the 1840s (in Bombay), the British brought with them an institution containing an ideology which, with its insistence on brotherhood—and, hence, of similarity over difference—threatened to undermine any justification for the continued rule by one race over another. The Masons of Bengal in the 1860s knew what opening up Freemasonry to Indians would mean, and

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without wishing them to be free; and that a nation could itself enjoy self-governing institutions without feeling an obligation to extend them to its subjects."

they were dead set against it. It was Lord Zetland (the English Grand Master) and his deputy, Lord Ripon, who in the 1860s had to insist upon the principle of universal brotherhood and, in doing so, promoted, albeit from the top down, a new vision of empire among Masons.

To be sure, Queen Victoria's 1858 Proclamation offered the vision of an equal-opportunity empire, one based on merit instead of race, but this was very slow in coming. In Bombay, the Masons were already making Indians "brothers" a decade and a half before this (in isolated cases much earlier in other parts of India). Francis Hutchins sees only the uncompromisingly racist and nationalist outlook of the British in India,[8] but it is clear that the Masonic discourse of brotherhood was a powerful one that engaged the highest sentiments of not a few Britons and not a few British rulers of India, including the royal family.

The British—because of their own experience with Freemasonry in Britain after the Glorious Revolution, in which the Craft had helped to stabilize class conflict between the aristocracy and the increasingly assertive middling classes,[9] and also between religious sectarians—appear to have seen in Freemasonry a way to bind western-educated Indians to themselves (with the British in the role of English aristocrats back home, and Indians in the role of the English bourgeoisie), and to unite Christian rulers to their non-Christian subjects. But Freemasonry worked in the way that it did in England because Freemasons in the political system were gradually changing the system to accord with the principle of fraternity.[10] In 18th-century Continental Europe, whenever despotisms refused to act in what was seen as the enlightened British fashion, the bourgeoisie could

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[8] See ibid., chapter 7.

[9] See, for example, Ernest Beha, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Freemasonry* (London: Arco Publications, 1962), 111: "Perhaps the greatest contribution these up-and-coming mercantile middle classes made to history was their earnest desire for government on a sound stable basis."

[10] A good example of this is the role of two Masons, William IV and the Duke of Wellington in ensuring the passage of the Reform Bills to accommodate the middling classes in their struggle against aristocratic privilege. The Duke of Wellington was also instrumental in getting reform legislation passed to allow Catholics to hold government office.

use Freemasonry in a more aggressive manner, by delegitimizing the State. In Colonial America, for example, Freemasonry became divided over loyalty to the Crown and the belief of Masons such as Thomas Paine, Washington, Franklin, Revere, and others, that Britain had ceased to be an enlightened political order and had instead become a tyranny because of its denial of equal rights to fellow Englishmen in America. The British did not make this mistake again in the Second Empire, and gave autonomy to its White Empire in a timely and judicious manner. But in India, delay in accommodating the western-educated Indians led to extreme forms of nationalism which even moderate nationalists (many of them Freemasons) could not control.

Obviously, it was difficult for a British Mason in the Raj to see any good in the end of empire—an empire which had been so accommodating to, indeed, wrapped up with, Freemasonry. Some, like Frank Beaman and other members of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood*, thought to go the way of the Romans and treat western-educated Indians as equals—in other words, to fully implement "brotherhood" and all that that implied. By 1928, when Finan was writing, most Indian nationalists would not have been content merely with sharing power with the British—they were talking of running India without the British. Was Finan, a British Mason, behind the times in being elusive about when Indians would gain the right to govern themselves even as he admitted that "the children of today are the nation of tomorrow"? Perhaps since for him East had become West and *vice versa*, talk of full sovereignty for India was conveniently irrelevant.

The fact that the British were willing to call Indians "brother" means that we must be careful not to go to extremes in interpreting imperial Freemasonry as a mere tool imperialism. If Kipling may be used as a case study to tease out imperial British attitudes, Masonic universal brotherhood was intriguing and attractive, both at an intellectual and at a social level. British Masons often remarked with pleasure on the fellowship with Indians that the lodge gave them, for this fellowship was not to be found elsewhere.

The idea of Freemasonry as a primordial universal religion ("Proto-Evangelium"/"Root Doctrine") also fascinated British Masons, although for many of them the ancient mysteries that Freemasonry was thought to be a survival of reached their culmination in the spiritual teachings of Christianity. To express this, though, would have created a problem with Masons of other religions—good thing, then, that discussions of religion were not permitted in the lodge. Other "official" Britons—among them, the founding members of Lodge *Imperial Brotherhood* in 1908—saw in the primordial universal religion idea a fitting bulwark for a universal empire. Again, this must not be seen merely as instrumentalist, but also as reflecting a larger fascination with ancient and Eastern religions on the part of Westerners—an expression of the "Theosophical Enlightenment" which Freemasonry participated in, and was perhaps the first organized movement to promote.[11]

This romantic side of Freemasonry, the excitement of a mystical brotherhood which was to be found in one form or another in all lands and all ages, not only caused British Masons to reach out to Indians as "brothers" (recall Kipling's "Mother Lodge"), it also exaggerated and justified the imperialistic impulse, which could be highly romantic, full of the possibility for adventure, of conquest of exotic lands, and of rulership over the "Other." But romantic imperialism was often unequal in the relationship between rulers and ruled. Could paternalism and fraternalism coexist? When Kipling's Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnehan tried to use fraternalism to rule the Kafiris they were punished, for they had un-Masonically used the Craft to set themselves up as gods. Was this a cautionary tale by Kipling for the rulers of India? Kipling had his own solution for this contradiction: compartmentalization. In the "Mother Lodge," paternalism and hierarchy

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[11] This yearning for a mystical community is modern and is the flip-side of the alienating mechano-materialistic paradigm of modernity. See Peter L. Berger, Brigette Berger, Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 188: "Resistance to modernity and counter-modernizing movements and ideologies have been recurring phenomena in the Western history of the last two or three centuries."

would operate outside the lodge; inside, fraternalism and parity would reign, where "it doesn't do no 'arm." Clearly, this was intellectually unstable. Also, Indian Masons were not likely to accept this dichotomy.

Other British Masons, though, having met Indians "upon the level," could agree with Col. R.H. Forman, the Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, who, in his farewell address to the Grand Lodge on the eve of his retirement to Britain in 1911, delivered a moving sermon on love to his fellow British and Indian Masons:

> Struggling humanity, groping blindly in the gloom of passion and prejudice, amidst the welter of creed and dogma, vainly strives to find the light....
>
> ... All beings were created for love. The atoms of spirituality, the germs of righteousness that are in them, will one day bud forth and ceaselessly blossom until such time as they are united by one great communion of affection into one universal brotherhood.
>
> My Brethren tried and true,... rest assured that one day we shall meet; either in this world or in the course of some ultimate existence, to influence one another, righteously to help each other to scale the universal heights, children of one God, members of the great spiritual family, bearing on our brows the token of immortality: we are destined to know one another and be united in the holy harmony of love, far from the passions and deceitful mirages of the world...."
>
> From you all, rich and poor, lowly and exalted, black or white, Past Master or Apprentice, I humbly claim some little corner of remembrance in your hearts.[12]

If this was a "mask of conquest" surely it was a most cynical one if promoted wittingly for this end! Aside from a few cases, I do not accept that it was used cynically by the British.

For many Indian Masons the lodge served as a model for what the Raj could be, especially when it came to their position *vis-à-vis* the British in the empire. The struggle for parity was the genesis of modern Indian nationalism, and the lodge was an important testing-ground for nationalist aspirations. For these men, therefore, there was no tension over Freemasonry, or any desire to compartmentalize their relationship with the British. Quite the contrary! Their position was intellectually consistent: fraternalism meant

[12] Col. R.H. Forman, speech to Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, Bombay, 4 March 1911; quoted in A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 220-21.

equality, pure and simple. Indians who met their social and political superiors as equals in the lodge could not possibly feel awed by them again in the "profane" world. They could only feel resentment if those superiors adopted a haughty attitude towards them in the outside world. Indeed, "brotherhood" in the lodge led them to confront their British "brothers" outside the lodge in their quest for political and social equality. Dadabhai Naoroji, who declared in 1906 that Indians "'are British citizens, and are entitled to and claim all British citizens' rights,'"[13] is an excellent example of this. Freemasonry increased the patience of such men where perhaps non-Masons might have become extremists, as indeed a number did. (So far, I have found only one Freemason in the extremist camp: the Fabian Socialist Joseph Baptista, one of Tilak's chief lieutenants from 1914 to 1920[14]) Of course, extremism and conspiracy were not unknown to Freemasonry, but that was outside the Anglo-American Masonic world. Indian Masons were trained in moderation and harmonious relations, and the British could feel safe that their Indian "brothers" would not rile up the mob or toss bombs. Nevertheless, Indian Masons would not indefinitely put up with British foot-dragging in granting parity to them outside the lodge. Thus, we see in the speeches of Masons at the first Moderate Party conference in 1918 that, although professedly "moderate," they believed the time had come to demand the "divine right of self-government" for Indians.[15]

So, for those British Freemasons who saw in Freemasonry a tool of empire, it was to be a case of as much imperial consolidation as Masonic brotherhood could offer, but for Indian Freemasons, as much racial equality and respect as Masonic brotherhood demanded. That Freemasonry was seen by the two groups as the means to achieve these

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[13] Dadabhai Naoroji, quoted in Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom, the Story of the National Congress Told From Official Records* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1915), 444.

[14] See Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the* Lokamanya: *Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 186. Baptista was initiated in Lodge *Perseverance* in 1891, and in 1905 affiliated to Lodge *Aryan* from Lodge *Islam*—see Membership Registry for Lodge "Aryan" (MRA), entry #167.

[15] Already, in 1906, Naoroji had raised the issue of *svaraj* at the 1906 Congress—see Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom*, 445.

divergent goals shows the flexible nature of the movement, and its ability to maintain contradictory agendas in a dynamic tension. Masons themselves recognized the ability of the Craft to unite men of widely different opinions, religions, and cultures—indeed, they exulted in it:

> ... all over the Continent of Europe and throughout the United States, men of all languages and tribes are united under the same symbols, understand the same signs, belong to the same brotherhood. Persians, like those who lately travelled with the Shah, find a home in German Lodges; Englishmen and Arabs fraternise on the banks of the Nile; Parsee, Mahommedan, Christian, and Jew have no room for difference, as, bound together by the mysterious tie of Masonry, they own the same laws and perform the same rites.... Here the Kaiser William and the Republicans of the United States meet on equal terms; Turks and Russians, Hindoos and Arabs, Home Rulers and the supporters of Kings find ground for unity....
>
> Other societies have long since disappeared and been forgotten, but Masonry still thrives, and is stronger than ever. Amongst its members have been numbered potentates and nobles, Republicans and Communists; yet the Craft has never been broken up by internal dissension, and the world has not yet learnt from recreant Masons the mysteries of the working of the Lodge.[16]

The fact, for example, that George Washington, who took his Masonry seriously, could yet reject monarchy, and that the British royal family, many of whose members were themselves Masonic leaders, strove hard to resist Republicanism in Britain, makes it difficult to be reductionist when determining Freemasonry's specific function in a society. Some things, though, were clearly part of the ideology of all Masons, and these may be said to be most of the features of Enlightenment ideology. Ideas about "civilization" and "enlightenment"—terms which are today classed as "development"—provided the areas of common concern in both imperial consolidation and the early nationalist quest for parity.

In his new book, the economist Amartya Sen states that open elections, "responsible government," universal education, basic health care, a free press, and the removal of gender inequalities, largely through girls' education, are crucial to economic

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[16] *Masonic Record of Western India*, vol. 11, no. 8 (November, 1874): 296-97.

development.[17] These "freedoms" are both the end of, and the means for, economic development and the economic and general well-being of societies. Sen seeks to revive a line of thought in economic and social analysis by Adam Smith, Condorcet, John Stuart Mill, and William Petty (a founder of the Royal Society), all of whom, while concerned with material prosperity, did not see it as an end in itself. In the Third World, Sen's theoretical precursors include the Mason Dadabhai Naoroji, whose seminal volume on Indian poverty, *Poverty and un-British rule in India*,[18] showed how the lack of a sufficiently "responsible" and truly British-style government in India had led to the impoverishment of the Indian masses.

In looking at Bombay in the 19th century, we find that Masons were prominent proponents and implementers of precisely these features of modern socio-economic development. Masonic lodges were arenas of democracy, constitutionalism, and responsible government—what Max Weber calls "legal-rational" authority; Masons created charitable schools run by the movement (albeit usually for children of indigent Masons); Indian Masons like Maneckji Cursetji and others promoted girls' schools; Masonic journals gave instruction and advice on basic health care and sanitary practices; the lodges sought to inculcate values which would serve their members well in society and in the new global economy of free trade; and Masons promoted a free (or largely free) press.

I have attempted to show that along with Masonic notions of constitutionalism, bureaucratization, and pluralism, Freemasonry's promotion of education and science, and its ritualism, religious theories, and romantic visions of the past could and did serve the need for social and political cohesion, and also "development" (in Amartya Sen's sense), in both an imperial state and a national one.

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[17] See Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom: Human Capability and Global Need* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).
[18] See Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and un-British rule in India* (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1901).

The idea of brotherhood and equality, of course, was not new in India. Various *bhakti* and Indian sufi orders promoted the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man long before Freemasonry washed up on India's shores. Leading members of the reformist Prarthana Samaj, for example, were Freemasons, but they also used the poetry of Marathi *bhakti* saints in their services. What *was* new about Freemasonry was that its ideas of fraternity combined with Enlightenment scientific and religious thinking to become a powerful force for modernity in the world. Intimately connected with the birth of the "modern," as recent scholars have shown, Freemasonry became *the* vanguard movement of modern history—organized, "constitutionalized," and universalized, as it was—and it also became something like a modern universal religion and religious community.

Those Indians who were most in contact with the British were quick to realize a few things: the West was not simply a military and political force to be reckoned with; it was a powerful social criticism of the pre-Enlightenment world (which in Europe included despotic government and the priest-craft of the Catholic Church), and that world included all of the non-Western world, as well (recall Lord Hastings' speech to the Masons of Bengal in Chapter 7).[19] The criticism came both from men reared in the Enlightenment and from Protestant missionaries, who themselves were closely connected with the technologically-oriented Dissenter factions of English society. Indians realized that there was no going back. Indeed, Enlightenment modernity liberated them from traditional society and, hence, was exhilarating to them, but complete liberation from traditional society is alienating, leading to what Peter Berger calls "homelessness."[20] Western-educated Indians did not want to become Macauley's deracinated "brown

[19] Ashish Nandy argues that, as a state of mind, "colonialism is an indigenous process released by external forces." At the same time, he asserts that colonialism "minus a civilizational mission is no colonialism at all."—see Ashish Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and the Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3, 11.

[20] See Peter L. Berger, *et al.*, *The Homeless Mind.*

Englishmen" completely. Freemasonry gave westernizing Indians a remarkable means to (1) preserve the core of their religion against the onslaught of Christian missionaries; (2) become "brothers" and equals to the Colonizer; (3) make their country, and before long their "nation," unified, powerful, and distinct.[21] Japan, after 1905, showed the non-Western world that this could be done without becoming wholly Western.

While Freemasonry promoted in India—whether in the Raj or in independent India—national or imperial unity based on secularism, its means, namely, religious latitudinarianism, is inherently weak in confronting growing religious and communal intolerance. Latitudinarians appear to be compromisers, either with secularism or with the doctrines of other religions. Ironically, in secular, pluralistic states (often brought into being with the help of Freemasons), even Freemasonry, like traditional religions, can eventually become privatized and a defuse "civil religion" replace the public rituals of Freemasonry, which may appear as too religious and unduly privileged by the State.[22] This seems to have happened in many parts of the world sometime after the First World War, when more and more men no longer felt the need to join Freemasonry. This was also a time of growing disenchantment with the liberal state and increased fascination with the kinship offered by fascism or socialism.

In an age of, first, Tilakite, and then Gandhian, mass politics, Indian Freemasons and their lodges were bound to become irrelevant to the Indian nationalist movement, as was the chummy relationship they had with their British "brothers." Actually, Freemasonry was never a mass movement; rather, it was an elite movement with mass aspirations and mass consequences, as recent historians of Europe and the United States

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[21] See ibid., 168: "The nation is defined as an all-embracing community, and thus is posited as an entity that can overcome the fragmentations and alienations of the modernizing process."

[22] For Freemasons, the emotional bond of fraternity was fundamentally a religious concept—the "charity," or *caritas*, of St. Paul, and the neo-Platonic *agape*—and the notion of the brotherhood of man had to be grounded, as well, in a belief in the fatherhood of God.

have demonstrated.[23] Yet, despite its growing historical irrelevance as the 20th century advanced, Freemasonry was important to the development of modern India through its structure, its style, the activities of its members, and its ideology, which has perhaps been the most enduring legacy of Freemasonry in India, for it helped Indians construct a pluralistic and tolerant nationalism. This is still the model of nationalism espoused by the Indian State.

[23] Even in the United States, the country with the largest Masonic membership, it was not a mass movement, although its membership may have reached into the low millions in the 19th century.

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APPENDIX A:

MASONIC STATISTICS AND MEMBERSHIP DATA FOR BOMBAY

How many Masons were there in Bombay and its environs, and what was their ethnic and class composition from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries (roughly 1925)? Unfortunately, my data is incomplete: old membership registries of important Indian lodges (such as Lodge *Islam*, alas!) have been lost by lodge secretaries who passed away unexpectedly, or the basement of Freemasons' Hall in Bombay, where trunks containing old lodge records are stored, has been flooded, or certain lodges composed mainly of Europeans have been transferred back to Britain after India's Independence. Also, I did not have access to all the lodges in the Bombay Presidency: those in Sindh, for example, have, like all lodges in Pakistan, been suppressed by the government. Fortunately, various lodges often produced "souvenirs," or booklets, to commemorate important lodge anniversaries, and sometimes these include complete membership lists (although at other times, only lists of Past Masters). They may also include occupational data in the little histories that usually are part of such souvenirs.

Of the 3432 entries in my database, 2027 (59%) are British; 738 (21%) are Parsi; 385 (11%) are Hindu; and 163 (5%) are Muslim. There were 46 Jews (1.3%) and 75 non-British Europeans, Goans, East Indians, and two Sikhs (2.2% altogether). Unfortunately, as mentioned above, the early membership records for Lodge *Islam* are lost; otherwise, I am certain the number of Muslim Masons would be greater than what I was able to gather. All I have is a list of Masters of the lodge. The first three Indian communities taken together number 1286, and represent 37% of the total. Although the number of Indian Masons appears small relative to the populations of the Indian communities out of which they came, it is important to remember that elites generally represent a small percentage of their societies at all times, yet can wield influence out of all proportion to their numerical size.

Occupational data for Indian Masons was not always included with lodge membership records, therefore, when calculating occupations as a percentage of the whole, the latter figure for each group did not include those Masons whose occupations were unknown (see bottom row of Table 9.3). Such calculations by definition render samplings of the whole, but the samplings are so large that they probably give a very accurate picture of what was going on. I separated the Indian Masons by community and then combined the community figures to get a total figure for each broad occupational category. Only the five largest occupational categories are presented below. The results are as follows:

Table A.1.

Occupation Type	Parsi	%	Hindus	%	Muslims	%	Total	%
Commerce	193	41	90	28	51	50	334	37.4
Government	26	6	25	8	4	4	55	6
Health/Medicin	56	12	42	12	9	9	107	12
Legal	63	13	89	27	11	11	163	18
Transportation	40	9	5	2	1	1	46	5
Unknown	270		60		62		392	

One fact comes across clearly: Indian Masons were mainly men of commerce—37.4%—or belonged to the new professions and modern occupations (such as those connected with the railroad)—36%. If we add to the latter non-military government workers, this figure rises to 41%. Actually various members of the other "new professions," such as doctors, high court judges, etc., also worked for the government, so these four categories should be taken as a whole and as representing the *intelligentsia*. Indeed, when Henry Morland, the Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India, visited Lodge *Rising Star* in early 1877 he observed that the lodge was "composed of such a large number of members from the different professions... (*viz.*, the Bench, the Bar, Engineering, Medicine and Commerce)...."[2] Lodge *Aryan*, from 1878 to 1978, had 672 members, of whom 178 were from the legal profession, 48 from the medical, 22 chartered accountants, 5 journalists, 31 engineers, and the rest "merchants or other professions."[3] As a point of comparison, many of the British Masons were associated with the military (406), whereas only two Indians were. It is in keeping with a pattern that the Indian Masons came mostly from the mercantile and new middling classes. This was precisely the economic class background of most Masons in the early 18th century in England, when the first Grand Lodge was formed. "Perhaps the greatest contribution these up-and-coming mercantile middle classes made to history was their earnest desire for government on a sound stable basis."[4]

In comparing the rates of entry of Britons and Indians into Freemasonry, some data exists from the District Grand Master of Bombay (E.C.) in 1912, George Dunn, which is quite revealing: "Reviewing his own masonic career, Rt. Wor. Bro. Dunn stated

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[1] I.e., work in rail, sea, or hotel occupations

[2] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 204.

[3] Dr. Nirbhaya Thakar and Chandrakant M. Patel (recompiled and revised by Vasudeo M. Patel), "Short History of the *Aryan* Lodge," in *The 'Aryan' Lodge, No. 30 G.L.I., Centennial Jubilee Celebrations* souvenir.

[4] Ernest Beha, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Freemasonry*, 148.

that in 1896 there were 25 Lodges (the correct number was 26) in the District and the number of Brethren was 860, of whom 231 were Indians. In 1912 there were 37 lodges and the total number of Brethren 1,982, of whom 686 were Indians."[5] It is noteworthy that Dunn specified how many Indians there were under the English Constitution in the Presidency, for it meant that British Masons were keen on monitoring the spread of the Craft among the indigenous population.

The statistics show that in 1896, Indians made up 27% of the Masonic membership under the English Constitution, and in 1912, 35%. This is close to my own figure of 37% for the period 1840 to 1925. Although the number of lodges had only increased by 142% in sixteen years and the total membership by 230%, the number of Indian members had increased by a staggering 297%, as opposed to 206% for the Europeans. This means that in the two decades leading up to the First World War lodges were getting larger on average, and Indians were coming in at a rate 50% higher than Europeans.

To get an idea of Masonic statistics for other parts of the world in the late 19th century, we find that in 1875

> Bro. Drumond's table of statistics shows that in 48 American Grand Lodges there are 585,269 members.... In England and her colonies there are 91,750 Masons; in Scotland, 21,000; in Ireland 18,400; in Prussia, 35,193; in Italy, 12,053; in Spain, 4,200; in Portugal, 2,800; in France, 10,800; in Belgium, 2,185; in Switzerland, 1,800; and in Norway and Sweden 10,800. Total, 210,981. From this it appears that American Freemasonry exceeds all these countries in strength and influence.[6]

Thus, a total of 1286 Parsi, Hindu, and Muslim Masons in a roughly eighty-year period in the Bombay City area (and there were probably more—some Bombay data is lost forever, as mentioned before) suggests that the population of Indian Masons in the Presidency may have been close to Switzerland's and Belgium's Masonic population. Only a couple of thousand Masons in Belgium in the 1860s occupied sufficiently important positions in the government and society that the Jesuits deemed it necessary to launched a vigorous press campaign against them. Writing of the situation, the editor of the *Bombay Catholic Examiner* (for October 28, 1865) accused the Masons of being not only "free-thinkers" but also "free-doers" and "fanatics of irreligion." Moreover, the

> masonic lodges that govern Belgium have another object in view besides the anti-religious one: they aim at emancipating woman. Fourier could not succeed in this, and his phalanstere provokes disgust; they have another sort of system now. They establish schools from which they banish every religious symbol, practice, and teaching; an American importation this.[7]

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[5] K. Gopalaswami and Dr. S.K. Aiyer, *History of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, 1861-1961*, 43.

[6] *MRWI*, vol., 12, no. 9 (December 1875): 346.

[7] Quoted in a piece entitled "Intolerance" (by George Bease?), in *MRWI*, vol. 2, no. 7 (October 1865): 284. It is timely to learn that in the 1860s America was believed in Europe to have applied the separation of church and state to the schools, and suggests that the attempts by various American school boards and state legislatures in the 1990s to reintroduce prayer into public schools (in defiance of a Supreme Court ruling of the 1960s), may represent a return to a newer rather than an older practice.

All of this points to the fact that a small group can make great changes in a society if its members share an ideology, have good organizational skills, and have good connections to the government. All these the Masons of Bombay had.

APPENDIX B

THE PROMOTION OF INDIAN VERNACULARS AMONG MASONS

An important element feeding the development of nationalism is the choice of a vernacular language, which gives voice to the nation.[8] Since lodge meetings were usually conducted in English, one would conclude that Masonry promoted the language of the British colonizer, and for the most part this was true. However, English was a necessary bridging language for the lodge. In British India, where people were on the move, travelling from city to city or station to station, a lodge which was worked in a language other than English would have divided both Britons from Indians and Indians from Indians (can one imagine a western-educated Chitpavan Brahmin speaking to Kulin Brahmins in a language other than English in the late 19th century?).

Yet English was not used to the absolute exclusion of other languages in the lodge. In fact, one British observer at the proceedings of the mainly Parsi lodge, *Eastern Star*, on the night of April 19, 1869, wrote, "I think the candidates were not able to understand English properly; and consequently I here take the liberty to remark that the *most important part of the ceremony* be translated into Guzeratee for the behoof of such candidates in future."[9] However, there was a tradition in Lodge *Rising Star*, at least, of giving a translation when needed. As early as 1844, James Burnes, the Master of Lodge *Rising Star*, delivered a speech in Persian to the members of the lodge as some of the "Native Brethren knew not English, and it was necessary to do so."[10] In 1862 we find that the proceedings of some lodge meetings in Lodge *Rising Star* "were also interpreted in Persian and Gujarati for the edification of those members who understood English imperfectly."[11] Later, in 1890, the ex-Governor of Bushire, the Malik-o-Tojjar, was entered, passed, and raised in that lodge, and the proceedings "of the meetings at which Brother Malik-o-Tojjar received his three degrees were interpreted to him in Persian, owing to his imperfect knowledge of the English language."[12] Earlier, in 1864, in Lodge *Rising Star*, "Brother A.F. Moos was presented with the Founder's medal in recognition of the trouble taken by him in translating the Bye-Laws and getting them printed. There are at present in the lodge library several printed copies of these Bye-Laws with their Gujarati translations."[13] This means that even among the lodge's mostly Parsi membership, a thorough-going understanding of the constitutions and by-laws, as well as the highly formalistic English of the ritual itself, was lacking among some members (perhaps quite a few, considering that there were "several" printed copies in the lodge library). It also means that Masonic constitutional ideas were being disseminated not

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[8] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 40-46.

[9] Letter to the editor from "R.A.M.," dated April 30, 1869, in *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 2 (May 1869) (pp. 69-70): 70 (italics in original).

[10] *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, second series, vol. 12 (1845), March issue: 138.

[11] D.F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India*, 138.

[12] Ibid., 257.

[13] Ibid., 148.

only through English and among the English-speaking Indians, but through the vernacular link language of Bombay.[14]

Even greater linguistic diversity existed in lodges outside British India. At Gulbarga, Lodge *Ekram*, No. 756, S.C. was established in June 1888, with Nawab Ekramullah Khan, Yar[15] Jung Bahadur as its first Master. "The consecration ceremony was translated by Bro. Ragunath Prasad unto Urdu, it being intended to work the Lodge in that language."[16] Raghunath Prasad was later to become a judge of the Nizam of Hyderabad's High Court.[17] In the city of Hyderabad itself, Lodge *Hyderabad*, No. 787, S.C., was founded in 1892. Since "most of the members [which included members of the Nizam's family]" were "ignorant of the English Language, the Founders preferred to have the working of the Lodge in this oriental language [i.e., Urdu].... Bakshi Raghunath Pershad, with the help of Hafiz Mansab Ali and Rai Hukumchand translated the Ritual from English into Urdu. The translation was revised in 1907 by Syed Mohamed Husain Bilgrami which is still followed in the Lodge."[18] Admittedly, to find a lodge in India worked in a language other than English was exceptional. Since the situation was one where most of the members did not understand English and yet wanted to be Masons, it does not appear that the use of Urdu was any kind of nationalist or political statement. Instead it shows the flexibility and inclusiveness of Freemasonry (whose ritual is performed in many languages throughout the world, after all).

Even in British India, Masons were not set in stone over the issue of English in the lodge, as we see from the letter by "R.A.M." above. Also, British Masons like George Bease, the editor of the *Masonic Record*, were not averse to promoting vernacular literature, even of a non-Masonic type:

> We have been favoured with an elegantly printed copy of Poems, original and select, in Guzerathi, by Bro. Rustomjee Cowasjee, more popularly known under the *nom de plume* of "Zaboolee Rustom," under which name he contributed very largely to the Native periodicals. The Poems have met with general approbation among Bro. Rustomjee's countrymen, and others acquainted with Guzerathi. This clever author has also translated several French and Persian works; and as a Dramatist several of his pieces have been performed with great success in Grant Road Theatre at Bombay.[19]

Rustomjee's book of poems was dedicated to a fellow Mason, "Syed Toorkee bin Syed, ex-Imaum of Muscat, at whose initiation into Masonry Bro. Rustomjee so materially assisted in interpreting the whole of the ceremony of the three degrees [into Arabic], and since which a warm friendship has existed between them."[20] This was yet another instance where a language other than English was used in the Masonic ritual.

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[14] Although surrounded by Marathi speakers, Bombay's *lingua franca* was Gujarati.

[15] Spelled incorrectly as "Yah" by Finan (see below).

[16] A. Finan, *History of the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India*, 154.

[17] See J.D.B. Gribble, *History of Freemasonry in Hyderabad* (Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1910), 218.

[18] G.S. Gupta, *Freemasonic Movement in India*, ch. 4, 82 (taken by him from lodge souvenir).

[19] *MRWI*, vol. 6, no. 5 (August 1869): 162.

[20] Ibid.